

# Barrowford St Thomas Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119431
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313290
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathleen McArthur

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	120
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr David Chadwick
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Tracy Heys
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Wheatley Lane Road Barrowford Nelson Lancashire BB9 6QT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 614462
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 449812

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 February 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	313290

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of provision in the Foundation Stage, pupils' personal development and well-being and the impact of the new leadership and management team. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors, and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, given in its self-evaluation, were not justified – although provision in the Foundation Stage was found to be good, rather than satisfactory. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than most. It stands in attractive landscaped grounds on the edge of the village. Most pupils come from the village and some travel in from nearby towns and villages. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than the national average. A much lower than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. There are two year groups in each of the four mixed-age classes. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year and the deputy headteacher has been in post for one term.

The school holds the Investors in People award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and a Quality Mark for Physical Education.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that very successfully achieves its stated aims of welcoming all pupils into a safe and secure Christian environment and providing an excellent education. Pupils thrive, gain a love of learning and become mature and responsible members of the community who show high levels of care and concern for others. Parents are very supportive and many commented that their children are very happy at the school. Consequently, the school is a very popular choice.

Outstanding leadership, very high quality teaching and learning and very good use of the informative assessment systems result in excellent progress and high academic standards. Children enter the Foundation Stage with typical skills for their age and progress well in the Reception class. Progress speeds up through the school. One parent commented that teachers 'stretch' their pupils and set high standards; over time, standards have been consistently above average at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. In 2007, every Year 6 pupil gained at least the expected level in all the national tests. They exceeded challenging targets to reach standards well above the national average. Pupils did particularly well in science with many achieving the higher level (Level 5). The school's information on pupils' progress, and work observed in books and lessons, shows that the current Year 6 pupils are well on course to match this. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also progress very well because they receive very effective individual support.

Outstanding personal development, well-being and care result in very happy, confident pupils who are helpful, friendly and really work hard. Pupils commented, 'School is fun' and excellent relationships contribute most effectively to their rapid progress. Older pupils are especially helpful towards the little ones. Attendance is well above average and all arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements. Pupils have a very good understanding of eating sensibly and exercising to be healthy. Behaviour is good overall and very good in lessons, ensuring that learning proceeds purposefully in a harmonious environment. Pupils feel very safe in school and know they can take any problems to a teacher or to the head boy or head girl. Play leaders and school councillors are really proud of their contributions to the school community, as are those who have recently trained to lead the afternoon 'Energise' sessions. Concern for the wider world is shown through keen involvement in fundraising activities. High academic standards and outstanding personal and social skills give pupils an excellent basis for the next steps in their future lives. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, with a very strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Links with the Building Bridges in Pendle project and the Pendle Small School's Network, promote awareness of, and respect for, different cultures and ways of life. Very good, active links with the church and the parish enhance all aspects of pupils' personal, moral and social development. Many parents commented how much they value the school's Christian ethos.

High quality teaching results in outstanding academic and personal skills. The staff are fully committed to ensuring every pupil reaches his or her full potential. Lessons are very well planned and organised, making full use of every available resource to stimulate and involve pupils in their learning. The teaching assistants provide very skilled support. The good curriculum provides a varied range of activities and an excellent programme for personal and social education. Careful adaptations ensure the learning needs of every pupil in the mixed-age classes are met very well. A current school priority is to develop more links between subjects to make learning

more meaningful and relevant. For example, literacy, history and personal and social education were linked effectively when Year 3 and Year 4 pupils wrote imaginatively about the feelings of wartime evacuees. Pupils really appreciate working with information and communication technology equipment and demonstrate good skills. Visits, visitors, clubs and additional sports and music coaching enrich the curriculum very well and contribute strongly to cultural development. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about a Manchester museum, the local Heritage Centre and the forthcoming visit to see the musical 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dream Coat' saying, 'School trips are really good.' Pastoral care is excellent. Very good systems track and monitor academic progress meticulously; they provide valuable information for planning learning activities and ensure help is quickly and effectively directed. Pupils are closely involved in evaluating how well they are doing and have very good knowledge of what to do to reach their next targets.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, skilfully supported by the new deputy headteacher. Working as a strong team, they have quickly gained the support of all staff, governors and the school community to implement a very clear vision for improvement based on honest self-evaluation. The inspection found the school evaluated its overall performance accurately, but was a little modest in some areas. Governance is excellent; governors are very committed and their knowledge of the school gives them a secure base from which they question and challenge. The budget is shrewdly managed, giving excellent value for money with funds carefully earmarked for improvements. Strong links with local schools and all external support agencies support learning and personal development effectively, particularly for the pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The leadership team has made a very positive impact, seen in outstanding achievement and standards and pupils' personal development and well-being. All issues from the previous inspection have been thoroughly tackled. Consequently, there is excellent capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start in school due to good provision in the Foundation Stage. The warm, welcoming and very caring ethos ensures they feel settled and very secure so that they quickly gain confidence and are eager to learn. They make good progress because they are taught well and take part in an interesting range of practical investigational activities in all areas of learning. Children do not have enough opportunity to choose and plan learning activities for themselves. The school has identified this as an area to be developed. Children speak and listen well and were very keen to experience cooking and tasting different foods for the Chinese New Year. They really enjoy working outdoors in the dedicated area provided since the previous inspection. By the time they move to Year 1, the very great majority of the children reach, and many exceed, the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure children in the Reception class have more opportunities to choose and plan learning activities independently.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

8 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barrowford St Thomas Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 6TQ

You may remember that I visited your school and spent the day with you recently. I would like to thank you for making me very welcome and helping me to complete my work. It was Chinese New Year so Class 1 children were having great fun tasting different Chinese food and making masks for the Year of the Pig. Many of you told me you were going to Liverpool to see 'Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat' just after half term. I know you were really looking forward to this and I am sure you will enjoy it.

I found many good things during my day and I thought you would like to hear about them.

- Your school is outstanding. You all told me how you really enjoy being at St Thomas and your parents are very happy with the school too.
- You are taught extremely well and find your work interesting so you work very hard and behave well. This means you make very good progress and reach higher standards than pupils in most schools. Well done! You all know your targets and what you have to do to improve your work.
- You feel safe and well cared for, and you told me that the new fences and gates have made you feel even safer in school. I was very impressed by the way you all help and care for each other. I know you are keen to do jobs in school and I could see the 'Energise' leaders were doing a great job getting everyone exercising and playing games in the playground!
- Making sure all this happens are an excellent team of teachers, governors and your headteacher, supported by your parents and families and by the very good links with St Thomas Church.

I have asked the staff to give the youngest children a bigger mixture of activities so that they have more chances to choose and plan their own learning.

Well done everyone! Please keep up all these really great efforts and continue to enjoy your lovely school.

I send my very best wishes to you all

Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector