

# Brindle St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119462
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313305
<b>Inspection date</b>	14 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Herring

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

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<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	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joan Croasdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Valerie Walsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Water Street Brindle Chorley Lancashire PR6 8NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 852379
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 854852

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The achievement of more able pupils in writing.
- Planning of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage.
- The effectiveness of systems of assessment, tracking and guidance to help pupils to improve.

Evidence was gathered from performance data and other school documentation including the school's self-evaluation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils, parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found that all of the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation form were justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

- This small school serves a rural village and surrounding area of predominantly owner occupied housing. All three classes contain more than one age group. The proportion claiming free school meals is below average. Almost all pupils are from White British families and no pupil is at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. A higher number of pupils than is usual join the school other than at the traditional time. The school has close links with the church, the local cluster of small schools, specialist high schools and with local businesses and football clubs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. The outstanding level of care and individual support it provides enable all pupils to achieve well.

Guided by its Christian tradition and a good programme for personal, social and health education, pupils' personal development is good. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good; many parents related how well their children develop socially to become 'respectful, polite and kind' members of the community. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils join in well in lessons, though the presentation of their work is a little untidy. They say they enjoy school and the extensive range of lunchtime and after school activities on offer. This enjoyment and initiatives, such as certificates for a class having no absences for a week, has resulted in excellent attendance. Pupils know how to keep healthy. They value the daily fruit on offer and many pupils joined in a fun run for charity. Pupils say they feel safe because everyone in school gets on well with each other. They are confident they could speak to any adult should a problem arise. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. Even in the Reception year children are proud of their jobs as milk monitors and of being a member of the school council. Older pupils show very good community spirit as they care for the younger ones, for example, pupils in Year 5 are linked to a child in Reception to help them settle quickly into school. They make a very good contribution to the church and the village, for example, taking an active part in the annual Brindle Flower and Produce Show, and its competitions, which is held at the school. Pupils develop a good level of basic skills, recognised by the award of the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2007, and this helps to prepare them well for future life.

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and overall standards are above average. In the 2007 teachers' assessments in Year 2 standards were above average in mathematics and reading. There has been good improvement in reading since the last inspection because of the high priority placed on this aspect. Standards were broadly average in writing though fewer than could be expected achieved the higher level. Pupils achieve well in Key Stage 2 because of consistently good teaching. In the 2007 national tests standards were above average in mathematics and science and exceeded the challenging targets set. However, fewer than expected achieved the higher level in writing. In judging overall progress account has been taken of the comparatively high level of pupil mobility. Of the pupils who completed the Key Stage 2 tests almost half of the pupils had completed a substantial part of their education elsewhere. An examination of the school's detailed system for tracking pupils' progress shows that all the pupils who had been at the school since Reception made good progress and achieved the expected level or above. All the other pupils made good, or very good progress at this school, sometimes from a very low starting point, because of the exceptional level of individual support which is a strength of the school.

The school has taken prompt action to improve the achievement of more able pupils in writing. Examination of the books for current pupils indicate that rigorous assessments and clear targets for improvement for each individual have helped to raise standards in writing throughout the school, including that of the more able pupils. However, the handwriting does not always match the good quality of the content.

Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Lessons are generally well planned to meet the needs of individuals. In most classes pupils respond well to the high level of challenge and join in enthusiastically so that they learn well. Teachers take the time to mark work carefully and to

give pupils helpful suggestions to help them improve. Learning is less successful in occasional lessons for younger pupils where the organisation of activities for different year groups is not always managed effectively. The strong support of the skilled teaching assistants makes a good contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is good overall. The strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy has resulted in good standards. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in other subjects. Themed weeks, such as multicultural week and health and fitness week, help to focus pupils' attention on these aspects. A variety of modern foreign languages are on offer and unusually this includes the opportunity to learn some Mandarin Chinese. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities beyond the school day, including an annual residential trip.

The outstanding level of care, guidance and support enables all pupils to achieve well. One parent commented that they 'couldn't speak too highly of the level of support given'! All the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and rigorously applied. The generous number of experienced classroom assistants ensures that all pupils are well supported or challenged as appropriate. The school seeks help from specialist agencies where needed. The school has developed very good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. Together with thorough and helpful marking these are used well to help pupils improve. Pupils are very well aware of what they need to do to make their work better and this is helping to raise standards.

The school is led and managed well. The skills of the headteacher were recognised outside the school when she was asked to support a school experiencing difficulties. There is a strong sense of staff working together in this small school for the benefit of the pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate in every respect and is used well to identify and address areas that need attention, indicating a good capacity to improve. For example, additional reading sessions and supplementary resources were used successfully to address an identified weakness in reading. Governance is good. There have been good improvements in reading and in subject leadership since the last inspection, and work to improve the Foundation Stage curriculum is ongoing.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children enter the school with a range of skills that vary from year-to-year, but overall they are typical or above what are usual for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Children reach, and many exceed, the recommended goals by the time they enter Year 1. The strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills ensures that children make very good progress in these areas of learning. Assessments show that progress in the creative aspects of learning is less marked, though satisfactory. Where children are being directly taught by an adult, activities are well planned and children learn quickly. However, activities where children are working independently sometimes lack clear purpose and so learning is less focused. A new covered outdoor area is a welcome addition, although the use of this new facility to enrich the curriculum and extend learning is at an early stage of development.

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

- Improve pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work.
- Develop the use of the new facilities to improve independent learning and enrich the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	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>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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



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**Annex B**

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

15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Brindle St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lancashire,  
PR6 8NH

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you all in class and in groups.

I agree with you and your parents that Brindle St. James is a good school. It takes excellent care of you. All the adults give you very good help and support when you need it. You play your part splendidly by coming to school so regularly, working hard and behaving well. You told me how much you enjoy school because everyone is kind to each other and there are lots of interesting clubs and activities at lunchtime and after school. I hope you enjoyed the disco on St. Valentine's Day.

Teaching is good and so you learn well. Teachers take the time to mark your work thoroughly and make good suggestions to help you to improve. This helps you to make good progress in school so that you reach a good standard by the time you leave Year 6.

To make your school even better I have asked the school to help you to improve your handwriting so that it is easier to read the interesting things that you write. Incidentally, I really enjoyed reading Class 3's myths and legends on the school website. You can help by trying to be tidier when you set out your work. I have also suggested that more activities could be planned to make the most of the exciting new outdoor area for Reception children.

Shirley Herring

Lead inspector