

Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119484
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313313
Inspection dates	3–4 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	145
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Canon Tom Bill
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2006
School address	Church Street Burnley Lancashire BB11 2DL
Telephone number	01282 426873
Fax number	01282 426877

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. Although the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, only a very small proportion are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds the Investors in People accreditation and has recently achieved the Healthy Schools Award and Race Equality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school no longer requires significant improvement. This satisfactory school has an accurate view of its overall effectiveness and provides satisfactory value for money. It is a rapidly improving school. There are many more good features than reported at the previous inspection, and the weaknesses identified are being tackled with rigour and determination.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. In 2007, the results reported by the end of Years 2 and 6, although well below average, were the highest for many years. The rate of pupils' progress, including pupils who have English as an additional language, is also speeding up. School data and inspection evidence shows that standards in 2008 are on track to rise still further for all groups of pupils. This improving picture is a result of the school setting more challenging learning targets and keeping a close eye on pupils' progress towards them. Standards in writing are improving at a rapid pace. This reflects the very high priority, rigour and determination that the school places upon raising standards. Standards in mathematics and reading are also improving, though at a slower pace. The school is well aware that pupils are still overcoming previous weaknesses in their learning, and that achievement, which is satisfactory overall, is sometimes held back by lack of opportunities for them to practise basic skills, especially reading and numeracy, across the curriculum.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. It is improving and there are examples of good lessons. Staff seize opportunities for training to enhance their teaching skills. More active approaches to learning and the use of computerised teaching boards are having a positive impact in most lessons. However, staff turnover and the rapid pace of change have slowed the consistent application of good strategies. There is not yet a consistent approach to putting these good practices into action. Because of these inconsistencies, learning moves forward at satisfactory rate, rather than the good rate for which the school now aims.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are now good. Recent curriculum developments to promote enjoyment of learning and to increase pupils' understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe are contributing to an improving picture. Pupils share the vision for a better school and enjoy contributing to improvements. Pupils' behaviour is now good. Both pupils and their parents now say that this is a very caring, friendly, warm and welcoming place to learn. Care, guidance and support for pupils are good. Furthermore, since the previous inspection, attendance has improved dramatically, moving from well below average and inadequate to above average. The school owes this success to a steely determination to improve attendance and to the good use of attendance management systems.

Staff, pupils, governors and parents agree that the leadership of the headteacher is 'inspirational'. She has put the school on a clear pathway of improvement. The senior leadership team and governors relish the many opportunities they have for training. They apply their newly found skills with growing confidence. This, along with the hard work and commitment of other staff, is helping to turn this school around and efforts are paying significant dividends. The school's tight focus on continuing this improving trend demonstrates good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in the Foundation Stage, their skills are well below those typical for their age. Their communication, language and literacy and their personal, social and emotional skills are particularly weak. Staff place high priority on improving children's skills in these areas. Adults seek out every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together, talk about their learning, behave well and develop independence. This, along with a wide range of lively activities and good teaching and learning, ensures that children settle quickly into school routines and discover that learning is great fun. Recent changes are helping to speed up children's progress. Staff now keep a more watchful eye on how well individual children are doing, so that daily activities take account of their varying needs. Staff quickly pinpoint the additional needs of children who are at an early stage of learning to speak English. They provide the extra support necessary to help them to achieve well. Consequently, when children transfer to Year 1, their skills have improved, though many have not reached the goals set for their learning. There are good plans to continue to improve provision. Staff know, for example, that their next step forward is to develop and make greater use of opportunities for learning outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and mathematics.
- Ensure consistently good practice in teaching and learning across all classes.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills, especially reading and numeracy, across the subjects of the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. In 2007, pupils' performance in national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6, although well below average, was the highest for several years. Raising standards and accelerating progress is a key school priority and, in the last two years, there has been rapid improvement. Staff now set more challenging learning targets and keep a closer eye on how quickly pupils are learning. These efforts are already paying dividends and the school remains tightly focused on securing much more improvement. School data and inspection evidence shows that the trend of improvement is set to continue in 2008. Significantly more pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, are on track to make or exceed the expected rate of progress than in previous years and to reach the challenging targets set for their learning. In writing, progress has accelerated at a particularly rapid pace, so much so that current standards in Year 2 are broadly average. This reflects the rigour with which initiatives to tackle weaknesses have been introduced. Standards in reading and mathematics are also improving; though at a steadier rate. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language often receive additional support. This enables them to make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils feel happy, safe and secure. They behave well, are clear about school rules and understand the consequences of their actions. Pupils' achievement is improving because they now attend school more regularly. They are keenly aware of the importance of regular attendance and show their delight when rewarded for their efforts. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution to making their school a happier, healthier and safer place. They take on responsibilities, such as being 'buddies' and school councillors with great enthusiasm. Pupils are very aware of how their actions impact on their environment. They talk knowledgeably, responsibly and maturely about the how they can help to protect it and how to keep themselves healthy and stay safe. This is helping them to become responsible young adults of tomorrow. Pupils' growing personal and social skills, along with satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, provide a sound platform to support their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Purposeful activities, good organisation, positive relationships and the encouraging support from the high numbers of adults in classes are strong features of most lessons. Consequently, pupils are attentive and behave well. Hard working and committed teachers are responding with enthusiasm to many changes to practice. They are becoming increasingly adept at using computerised teaching boards, so that pupils have a greater enjoyment of lessons. Teachers regularly assess pupils in order to find out what they can already do. They use this assessment information increasingly well, especially in English and mathematics, to plan work that matches pupils' different needs. Good lessons occur when teachers have high expectations, share lesson objectives and targets with pupils and provide ample opportunities for pupils to engage actively, work independently and feel continually challenged. These good practices are not yet seen consistently in all classes, however. This means that learning moves forward at a satisfactory, rather than a good, rate.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. It also has some good features. The strong emphasis on supporting pupils' personal development and well-being ensures that pupils are able to get the most from their academic education. A good range of extra-curricular activities and theme-based events, such as an 'Environment Day', help pupils to make meaningful links between subjects and increase their enjoyment of school. Planning for literacy and numeracy is increasing pupils' progress. For example, in writing, learning is accelerating because pupils have more opportunities to practise vital speaking and listening skills from an earlier age. This is especially advantageous for pupils who speak English as an additional language. There are also now more opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length. There are not yet enough opportunities, however, for pupils to practise their basic skills, particularly their reading and numeracy skills in other subjects. A suitable range of support programmes boost the progress of pupils working at a level lower than expected for their age. Although provision

for challenging the more able pupils has developed well in literacy and numeracy, it remains restricted in other subjects and in activities other than lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know pupils and their families very well. This helps them to offer the right kind of care and support at the right time. Consequently, pupils are confident that someone will always help them to overcome difficulties and make them feel safe. Appropriate procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. Strong commitment to supporting pupils with social and emotional needs, including poor attenders, is seen in effective partnerships with parents and carers, nearby schools and external organisations. Academic guidance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Keeping a closer eye on pupils' progress is helping to ensure that any underachievement is spotted quickly. Increasing pupils' understanding of how to improve, also contributes to raising standards. These approaches, however, are not yet applied equally rigorously across all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. Much has been achieved in the short time since the previous inspection. Not only are standards rising but pupils' personal development has also been strengthened. Attendance has been transformed from inadequate to good. At the heart of this change is the very strong leadership of the headteacher. She has provided the clear direction needed and created a renewed energy that is transforming the school. The school knows itself well and self-evaluation is accurate. Priorities for improvement are well chosen and actions are planned carefully and meticulously. Pupils' progress towards targets is also tracked rigorously.

Everyone is working together effectively in order to maintain the momentum of change. Senior leaders, key subject coordinators and governors are now rightly confident in their ability to apply their skills to reviewing performance and in influencing the way forward. They know that their next steps are to ensure that initiatives aimed at improving teaching and the curriculum are applied consistently well across all classes.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

7 April 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burnley St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Lancashire, BB11 2DL

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were keen to talk to me and answered my questions thoughtfully. Your behaviour was good, and you were well mannered and polite. It was good to hear that you feel safe and happy in school. All the adults care about you a great deal. I particularly enjoyed joining your assembly, watching Year 3's class assembly and seeing how carefully you all listened. It was good to see you all getting so excited about your learning on 'Environment Day'. It is because of the many special events like these that your learning is so enjoyable. I was particularly impressed with just how much you know about the importance of protecting the environment and how you can help to keep your bodies healthy too. It was also pleasing to hear your delight when the winner of the weekly class attendance award was announced. Many of you are now coming to school more regularly and this is helping you to learn at a faster rate.

Your school is a satisfactory school. There are however, many things that are changing quite quickly. It is clear that these changes mean that you are now doing better at school. You are starting to learn at a faster rate, especially in writing. This is because your headteacher, staff and governors work very hard together to help you to reach higher standards. There are some things than can be even better still. I have asked your school to help you further by making sure that:

- you reach higher standards in reading and mathematics
- teaching and learning is consistently good across all classes
- you have more chances to practise your literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects.

You can help your school by always asking how well you are getting on and what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. You should continue to try your best in everything that you do and of course keep up the good attendance!

I wish you all the very best for a successful future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector