

Burscough Bridge Methodist School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119402
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327021
Inspection date	13 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	46
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat King
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Orrell Lane Burscough Ormskirk Lancashire L40 0SG

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	13 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a very small school. Pupils are almost all from White British backgrounds. Entitlement to free school meals is average. Pupils are taught in three classes, one of which includes children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils who join the school after the Reception Year.

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. Parents rightly value the welcoming atmosphere and the progress their children make. From very different starting points, both in attainment and in the time they have attended the school, pupils achieve well. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average. Pupils love school and are keen to learn. This is mainly because the school has a welcoming environment which develops pupils' confidence in their ability to be successful. The staff take good care of pupils' welfare and relationships are excellent. In turn, the pupils trust staff and are confident that help will be readily available if needed. Personal development is good. Pupils are happy and energetic, as is clearly evident in the fun they have during after school clubs. They know how to keep safe and healthy. When given the opportunity to be independent, most are reliable and responsible. Older pupils are mature and competent, taking their social responsibilities within the community very seriously. Their personal skills prepare them well for the future.

The challenges of mixed age groups and a wide range of abilities in each class are effectively met by good teaching. It encourages each pupil to make the best progress they can. The pupils' excellent behaviour owes much to lessons being interesting and well managed, with good use of stimulating resources and clear targets for improvement. Progress in science and mathematics is good, with the most able pupils attaining above average standards. Progress in writing is good in Years 1 and 2, but less so in Years 3 to 6, so standards in writing by Year 6 are not as high as they could be. At times there are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of narrative writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good support and consistently achieve well.

The curriculum provides a wide range of experiences, and generally good provision for literacy and numeracy. Pupils are taught in small groups and this enables staff to adapt the curriculum successfully to meet the varied needs of pupils in each class. Pupils respond well to the useful guidance they receive, either verbally or in written form, on how to improve their work. There is healthy competition to improve as quickly as possible.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The school is well led by a headteacher who provides capable and experienced leadership. Governors provide positive support and suitable challenge. Leaders at all levels work successfully together to provide a 'family' learning community which is well suited to the size of the school and the range of pupils' abilities. School self-evaluation is generally accurate. Although subject leaders know the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects fairly well, they have limited time for systematically monitoring their subjects across the school. The needs of the local community are well understood. Pupils' personal development and academic progress is clearly at the core of the school's actions and plans. Capacity to improve and value for money are good.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that overall are broadly typical for their age although these differ considerably between individuals and from year to year. Teaching and learning are good. Children's progress is assessed constantly and tasks are planned very effectively to build on children's developing knowledge and skills. Planning also takes account of children's interests to keep them well motivated. As a result, they make good progress from very different starting

points, especially in personal and social development, and early mathematical and language skills. An increased emphasis on learning about sounds and letters this year has led to better progress in writing. The overall attainment of those leaving the Reception Year in 2008 slightly exceeded the level expected for their age. The current year group are on target to again exceed expectations. Behaviour is excellent and children are well versed in class routines.

A good programme of introducing children to school enables them to settle quickly within the inviting and stimulating learning environment. They gain from the adults' detailed knowledge of their needs, and care and welfare is good. Children benefit from being in a small teaching group with good adult support. They also learn from watching the older pupils within the same classroom. Sessions include some opportunities for independent exploration and for children to follow their own interests but there is scope to extend free choice activities further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2 and increase the amount and quality of narrative writing undertaken for a range of purposes.
- Enable the subject leaders to systematically check the progress and standards in their subjects throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good and standards are broadly average by Year 2 and Year 6. However, the small number of pupils in each year group and the relatively high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities results in significant variations from year-to-year. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made consistently good progress over recent years. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good support and achieve well. They attain suitably high standards for their ability, but these are usually below the expectations for their age, which has an impact on the overall standards for the school. The more able pupils achieve well, especially in mathematics and science, although less so in English. Writing is the weaker aspect of work in English. Currently in Years 1 and 2, the school's focus on this aspect has successfully improved the pupils' attainment in writing, including for the most able pupils. Although improvements are also evident in Years 3 to 6, especially in spelling and punctuation, pupils have too few opportunities to write fluently and at length. This restricts their ability to explore their ideas while reinforcing their writing skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, are good. They are effectively encouraged through close links with the church and a good programme for personal and social education. Across the school, pupils have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and say they love school. They have an excellent work ethic and are confident in their own abilities. Lessons include independent work but there are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own studies or to follow their own lines of enquiry. Pupils say they feel safe and that adults are always on hand to help with any worries. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils are very considerate of each other. Older pupils demonstrate good self-discipline and maturity. The number of absences is in line with the national average.

Pupils have a secure understanding of healthy living. They understand the importance of a balanced diet and of exercise. Pupils play an important part in decision making through their elected school council. They gather views through the suggestion box and have recently been successful in securing new playground equipment. Pupils engage eagerly in fundraising projects and are keen to take responsibility for jobs around school. For example, older ones have recently been trained for their roles as play leaders. These factors, together with good achievement, prepare pupils well for their future education and citizenship.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, with examples of outstanding lessons. Pupils are confident learners. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils successfully encourage an atmosphere for learning that supports questioning, the sharing of ideas and the confidence to ask for help when needed. Teachers know the children well and have suitable knowledge of the age groups they teach. Lessons are well prepared, with clear teaching points, and well managed. Assessment is usually accurate. The careful attention to checking pupils' progress, planning for their needs and sharing with pupils the ways in which they can improve their work, provides an effective basis for the good progress made by pupils across the ability range. Pupils are keen to learn, enjoy their work in lessons and are proud of their achievements. Occasionally the planning of lessons does not allow enough flexibility for pupils to explore their own ideas and to have some responsibility for their learning. However, they are familiar with their targets and make good efforts to achieve them as quickly as possible. Their excellent behaviour enables them to make the best of their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broad and balanced. There are good opportunities for physical activity, a well attended range of after school activities, and generally good provision for literacy and numeracy. In Key Stage 2, the time allowed for pupils to develop their writing is not sufficient for them to make good use of the skills they have acquired in other aspects of literacy. Pupils across the ability range have ready access to all aspects of the curriculum, and the small groups in which they are taught help to ensure these are well adapted to their needs. Pupils' good personal development is well supported by a clear programme of personal, social and health education. The pupils' enjoyment of school is clearly linked to the wide range of experiences they encounter daily, including opportunities to take the lead, such as in organising the healthy tuck shop.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents praise the 'family atmosphere' in the school and the excellent relationships. Very good attention is given to care, health and safety issues. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including child protection, meet requirements. Staff are vigilant and supervision is good at all times. This is an inclusive school that provides good support for pupils with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An established system of rewards is valued by pupils and underpins the excellent behaviour.

Assessment records provide a clear picture of pupils' progress and the information is used well to allocate additional help or challenge as needed. Individual targets for pupils in Key Stage 2 are useful. They provide a goal to aim for and clearly illustrate what needs improving. Pupils in Key Stage 1 receive helpful advice during lessons but they do not have written targets that can be shared with parents or used as a constant reminder to help them as they work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership, well supported by staff with leadership responsibilities. Governors provide support and challenge and with the headteacher, consult widely when planning for the future. Priorities are well chosen and clearly linked to the differing needs of each year group as well the whole school. The contribution to community cohesion is good, especially within the school and its locality. All teachers have leadership responsibilities. They generally undertake these well, although the means of checking pupils' attainment and progress by subject leaders in individual year groups are not consistent. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, especially in setting targets for Key Stage 2 pupils that have helped them to become more involved in their learning. The developments to improve writing have been successful in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, although less so in Key Stage 2 where it remains a priority. Capacity to improve further is good. School self-evaluation is generally accurate. The means of collecting evaluative information are generally clear, but occasionally rely too heavily on informal discussions. This reduces the clarity of the evidence being reported to governors. There is a conscientious approach to keeping pupils' safe and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. A major strength of the leadership is the effective way in which the learning needs and progress of individual pupils are carefully considered and pursued, with an alert approach to ensuring each has equal opportunity to achieve.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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?	2

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

16 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burscough Bridge Methodist School, Lancashire, L40 0SG

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. You showed me how much you love school and are keen to learn. You look after each other very well and your behaviour is excellent. You make friends and help the younger children when needed. The staff look after you very well and help to keep you safe. You say you feel safe and know what to do if anyone makes you feel uncomfortable. The teaching in your school is good. You enjoy your lessons, work hard and are proud of your good progress. Most of you attain the best standards you can in reading, mathematics and science. For those of you in Key Stage 2, your writing is not quite as good as it should be. You know your targets and like the challenge of reaching them. You know how about healthy diet and exercise, and make good use of the after-school clubs.

Your headteacher and governors are very careful in managing the school so that you are able to make good progress in your work, are safe and have plenty of opportunity to enjoy every day. They have to check up themselves as well, just to make sure they are doing their best and I have asked them to do the following things to make the school even better:

- raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2
- enable those who have responsibility for subjects to be clearer about the standards and progress in each year group.

Best wishes for the future.

Jackie Barnes

Lead inspector