

Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119380
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339426
Inspection dates	15–16 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr F Heyworth
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Evans
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2006
School address	Larch Grove Bamber Bridge Preston PR5 6GX
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They spent two thirds of their time looking at learning and visited 14 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors observed six teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the school's link adviser. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 36 parent and carer questionnaires were received and analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of strategies introduced to accelerate progress and raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics
- how effectively the school is working to raise the attainment of boys
- how well teachers use different styles to meet individual pupil needs
- the extent to which subject leaders are involved in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The headteacher was appointed in January 2009, following a period of prolonged disruption to staffing, including to senior leadership. Most pupils are White British. A number of awards have been gained by the school, including the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The purposeful leadership of the headteacher has been the key factor in the school's improvement over the last year. She quickly identified that the disruption to staffing had resulted in some groups of pupils underachieving. A variety of initiatives was introduced to deal with the situation, including rigorous procedures for tracking individual pupil progress and staff working closely with local authority advisers and consultants. This action has proved successful and underachievement has been eradicated. Most pupils now make at least satisfactory progress and increasing numbers are making good progress.

Out of necessity, the headteacher has shouldered much of the responsibility for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and taking action for bringing about improvement. The school is now in a position to delegate this responsibility to subject leaders. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to identify and prioritise areas for development. Plans reflect what the school needs to do to consolidate success and gain further improvement. Established management systems enable the school to run smoothly. The capacity to improve is, therefore, satisfactory.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and achieve well. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. This represents satisfactory achievement from their skills on entering school. Action taken by leaders has raised standards in reading and mathematics. It has not been as successful in writing, which remains a weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English. Teachers are not always adept at identifying the specific next steps needed to further pupils' writing skills. Guided writing sessions lack sufficient focus on developing key writing skills. Some teachers show a limited range of teaching styles to meet pupils' individual needs. The involvement of pupils in assessing how well they are doing and how they might improve, is at an early stage of development. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively, especially during the introductions to lessons. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, showing enthusiasm and enjoyment in their activities. A wide range of enrichment activities extend the curriculum and add further variety to pupils' learning. Staff are firmly committed to ensuring the well-being and safety of pupils and this is much appreciated by parents and carers. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards, particularly in writing by:

- developing teachers' skills in identifying the next specific steps needed to further pupils' learning
- making guided writing sessions more focused on improving key skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - extending the range of teaching styles used to meet pupils' individual needs
 - fully involving pupils in assessing for themselves how well they are doing and how they might improve
 - ensuring teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support pupils' learning throughout lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by developing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and taking action to bring about improvement.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils show a lot of interest in their work and are eager to do well. They enjoy working together to complete tasks and appreciate the efforts of other pupils. Pupils confidently contribute to class and group discussions and maintain their concentration for lengthy periods. They especially enjoy exploring ideas for themselves, as was seen when pupils in a Year 6 mathematics lesson were investigating the use of coordinates in making alien masks and treasure maps. Pupils enjoy books and read well but tend to lack accuracy when constructing sentences in their writing activities. Pupils have sound mathematical calculation skills and use these competently to solve real life number problems. Pupils confidently use information and communication technology, as was evident when pupils in Year 4 were using a desk top publishing programme to make Easter cards. There is no significant difference between the achievements of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils, because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils make a good contribution to school life by taking on responsibilities and carrying them out diligently, including being a member of the school council or a buddy reader for younger pupils. They contribute well to the wider community, such as by fund-raising for local and national charities. Pupils' behaviour is welcoming and positive and they are polite and considerate to others. They are willing to reflect on their experiences and show respect for other people's feelings and values. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and are confident that any issues they raise will be dealt with promptly by the school. The satisfactory progress pupils make in gaining literacy and numeracy skills and their improving attendance means that they are soundly prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to explain ideas clearly and confidently. Sound classroom management means that pupils are usually engaged in their work and little time is lost. Relationships are good and contribute to the friendly and calm atmosphere that is evident in all classes. Teachers regularly update pupils about their progress and how to improve through marking and discussion. Pupils' self-evaluation skills are not well developed. Some teachers do not have a wide enough range of teaching styles to meet the needs of individual pupils. For example, in some lessons there is too much teacher direction and this limits opportunity for pupils to work independently and take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching assistants are not always deployed effectively to support pupils' learning during lesson introductions. During group activities, they generally provide valuable assistance for all pupils, but particularly for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A wide variety of out of school activities, including sports, cookery, board games and music clubs are well attended. Educational visits, including a residential stay for pupils in Year 6 and opportunities to work with visitors, who include professional sports coaches and story tellers, enhance pupils' skills and widen their experiences. The curriculum is being thoughtfully developed to enable pupils to better use skills gained in one subject to support learning in others. This is at an early stage of development. Modifications to the curriculum to provide activities that better stimulate boys' interests are proving

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

successful as they are becoming more engaged in activities. Curriculum planning does not always highlight a variety of teaching and learning styles that could be used to meet pupils' needs. The school's commitment to providing a variety of good quality sporting experiences is reflected in it gaining the Activemark.

The school provides a safe learning environment for individuals and groups of pupils. Staff know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil and comprehensive risk assessments are in place for activities, both in and around school and on visits. Support for potentially vulnerable pupils is an established part of the school's provision and plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Good links with outside agencies ensure extra support for individual pupils is available when required. Attendance is improving because of effective action taken by leaders, including the introduction of rewards for good attendance and working closely with parents and carers to improve the attendance of pupils who have not attended regularly in the past.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders drive the school forward satisfactorily by ensuring all staff are focussed on the key areas for development. They carry out their responsibilities diligently and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The promotion of equal opportunity and tackling of discrimination is sound, with the school checking the performance of different groups. This has identified that boys were not attaining as well as girls and lacked engagement in their work. A variety of strategies have been recently introduced to bring about improvement, including staff training and providing activities to better stimulate boys' interest. It is too early to measure the impact on boys' attainment but the signs are encouraging, as evidence shows they are far more interested and engaged in their activities. Leaders actively promote community cohesion within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. There is only limited evidence of success in promoting community cohesion beyond the school. The skills of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning and taking action to bring about improvement are not well developed. Governors are supportive of the school and have satisfactory skills in holding it to account for its performance and in planning strategically for long term improvement. Safeguarding requirements are met, though some aspects of record keeping lack sufficient rigour. The

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

school is working to tighten procedures further. Relationships with parents and carers are positive, with the school providing them with adequate information on their children's progress and achievement.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skill levels that are as expected for their age. Good induction arrangements enable children to settle into everyday routines quickly. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good and means children make good progress and achieve well across all areas of learning. Staff work well together and relationships between adults and children are good, which has a positive impact on the progress children make. The balance between activities directed by adults and those chosen by children is good and makes an effective contribution to their development as independent learners. Children show a lot of enjoyment in their activities and work well together, as was seen in their role play of Goldilocks and the Three Bears. The classroom is a welcoming and stimulating setting but the recently created outdoor area does not fully promote children's skills across all areas of learning. Good leadership ensures assessment information is used effectively to set tasks that are interesting and matched to children's individual abilities. Good quality care places strong emphasis on children's well-being. Parents and carers appreciate the way they are kept fully informed about the progress their children make.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to inspection questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. Two comments were typical of many, 'The school provides a caring and happy environment. Teachers respond well to any questions raised and keep us well informed of our son's progress and goals' and 'My child enjoys being at St Aidan's very much, so much so that she wants to attend even when not well.' A very small minority did not agree that their child was making enough progress at the school. Inspection evidence shows most pupils make at least satisfactory progress and increasing numbers are making good progress. A few did not agree that the school is led and managed effectively. Inspectors judge leadership and management to be satisfactory. A few indicated the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspection evidence does not support this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 36 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	58	15	42	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	67	12	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	44	15	42	4	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	47	14	39	4	11	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	61	13	36	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	53	13	36	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	47	19	53	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	12	33	21	58	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	53	12	33	4	11	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	50	15	42	3	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	39	19	53	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	50	13	36	4	11	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	58	12	33	1	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bamber Bridge St Aidan's Church of England Primary School, Preston, PR5 6GX

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do. Yours is a friendly school that is improving and helps you make satisfactory progress.

What we found out about your school

- You behave well and are polite and considerate to others, which contributes to the happy and welcoming atmosphere in the school.
- You are keen to learn and enjoy coming to school.
- Adults make sure you are safe in and around school.
- Many of you take part in the wide range of after school clubs.
- You enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or a buddy reader for younger pupils.
- In your questionnaires, you say learning is fun and everyone is friendly.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you to attain higher standards, particularly in writing.
- Make teaching and learning better to improve your progress.
- Improve subject leaders' skills in checking how well teachers are helping you to learn.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead inspector

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