

# St James' Church of England Primary School Blackburn

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119502
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	339458
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	398
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Duckworth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Philip Morgan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Oozebooth Terrace Blackburn Lancashire BB1 8EN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with governors, the school improvement officer, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies, school development plans and the school improvement officer's reports. In total, 229 questionnaires were received from parents and carers, analysed and considered, alongside questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

- the attainment and achievement of all groups of pupils
- the support provided for pupils and whether it is helping them to do their best
- the way that the school takes account of the different religious and ethnic groups in school and the community
- the effectiveness of leadership and management
- learning and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a focus on the use of the outdoor classroom.

## Information about the school

This larger than average school is based on two sites, just north of Blackburn town centre. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Over half are of Indian heritage and around one third have Pakistani heritage. An average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is high. The school has gained the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards. A daily breakfast club is provided on the premises. Since the appointment of the present headteacher in 2007, there has been a considerable change of personnel, including school leaders and governors.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

St James' Church of England Primary is an improving school and provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. It has strengths in pastoral areas so that good care, guidance and support enable pupils to develop well personally. Since the arrival of the present headteacher, there has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement, with many improvements made to provision. As a result, pupils' attainment is improving and their progress accelerating. The headteacher, school leaders and governors have a clear vision and ambition for the future. They have made effective use of advice and support from the local authority. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 achievement is satisfactory overall and often good in reading. Standards are broadly average, but too few pupils reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics. Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They have varied opportunities to play and explore indoors, but the outdoor areas are not used sufficiently to enhance their learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and outstanding practice. There are times, however, when more-able pupils are not stretched fully in lessons. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is currently being reviewed to link subjects together so that lessons are more engaging and interesting for pupils. Currently, opportunities for pupils to write when studying other subjects are limited.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they are keen to learn. In responses to the questionnaire, almost all agreed that they enjoy school and feel safe. Pupils have a good understanding of the essential features of a healthy lifestyle and appreciate the good range of visits, after-school clubs and sporting competitions that give them new interests and enjoyment. A good programme for personal education supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Senior leaders carry out thorough evaluations of provision and of pupils' achievement so that the school has an accurate view of its performance. Plans for raising attainment and for further school development set a clear agenda for improvement and ensure that all staff know what is required. Subject leaders are very knowledgeable and set good examples of classroom practice. Their role in monitoring teaching and learning is developing but they have too few opportunities to influence the practice of colleagues by sharing their expertise and flair.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and achievement in writing and mathematics, especially for more-able pupils by:

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- - ensuring that work consistently challenges all groups of pupils and that lessons include more opportunities for writing
- - extending the role of the subject managers so that good and outstanding classroom practice is shared.
- Develop the outdoor learning areas for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have varied opportunities, throughout the day, for active learning, purposeful play and exploration outdoors.
- 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**

The achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory overall and it is good in reading. In addition, some features of pupils' personal development are good.

On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is below average, especially in language and communication skills, and early mathematical understanding. Attainment for the oldest pupils in Key Stage 2 has been low in past years and achievement below average. Currently, staff and pupils are working hard to overcome gaps in previous learning and accelerate progress. Some improvements are evident, but the school fully recognises that there is still more to do. The most recent teacher assessments for Year 2 pupils, together with the current standard of work seen, show that an average proportion are working securely within the expected level. This marks a good improvement on previous years. The proportion of Year 6 pupils working at the expected level in English and mathematics is now close to average, but too few are attaining above average standards. In English, many pupils are competent readers, but their writing skills are less well developed. In some mathematics lessons, pupils are progressing rapidly towards their targets for mental arithmetic, computation and problem solving but this is not consistent across all classes. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities meet their individual targets and have good self-esteem. Boys and girls show the same interest in their work and they progress at equal rates. Pupils benefit from the bilingual support provided and most are fluent in English by the time they leave school. The gap in attainment between pupils of different ethnicity has been reduced considerably and teachers continue to monitor the progress of all groups closely.

Pupils say they enjoy school and are very happy. Their behaviour is good and harmonious relationships exist between the different ethnic and religious groups. Their good understanding of healthy living means that they enjoy fruit at playtimes and have plenty of exercise. They have a well-developed understanding of the importance of safety procedures, including those for using the internet. Pupils say that bullying is rare and dealt with swiftly. Attendance figures are affected by the number of days taken to celebrate religious festivals. When this element of authorised absence is removed, attendance is at least satisfactory. The school is working with community leaders and families to reduce the number and length of extended holidays to homelands in order to improve attendance further. Pupils enjoy community involvement through charity

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fundraising and caring for the environment. They have good opportunities to experience responsibility. For example, prefects help to ensure smooth-running playtimes and school council members represent pupils' views in the process of decision making. Satisfactory achievement and industrious attitudes prepare pupils soundly for the next phase of education.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, overall, with some good and outstanding practice. Managers recognise that the overall quality of teaching needs to improve further in order for the school to reach its own challenging targets. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected. Many improvements have been made to teaching, but are not all consistently embedded. Learning is assessed frequently and teachers have raised their expectations of what pupils can achieve. Tasks are planned to challenge pupils of different abilities and help them meet their targets. However, there are occasions when more-able pupils are not extended enough. For example, in mathematics, they might be given slightly harder tasks but not challenged fully through

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

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problem solving or investigational work. A more active approach to learning has been introduced, but there are still some occasions when pupils sit listening to the teacher for too long. There are good examples of marking and advice given to help pupils improve their work, but again this is not consistent across all classes. Experienced teaching assistants provide effective, targeted support for groups of pupils who need extra help. Good bilingual support ensures that young pupils can access all their lessons and provides additional help as needed. Parents' and carers' involvement in education is an ongoing area for development. At present, parents and carers learn about the curriculum through workshops and the school is trialling different types of homework tasks.

The curriculum is satisfactory and includes themed events. For example, MAD week integrated learning in music, art and dance and was much enjoyed. Links between subjects are developing, but there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length when studying subjects such as history or geography. In some classes, information and communication technology supports learning very effectively but, in others, it is underused. Several 'intervention' groups help pupils to catch up with their learning. This provides a good safety net for those not meeting expectations and is an important factor in pupils' improved progress. Provision for gifted or talented pupils is at an early stage of development. Good enrichment is provided for learning and pupils talk enthusiastically about the residential visits where they experience new, exciting activities.

The school takes good care of its pupils and has tried and tested welfare systems in place. There is overwhelming agreement by pupils that, 'Adults in school care about me.' The breakfast club provides a good start to the day for many pupils. Staff go to great lengths to secure specialist support, for example from social, educational and medical agencies, to meet individual needs. Good links with the children's centre and secondary schools ensure that pupils have a smooth induction into school and transition to the next phase of learning. The buildings and grounds are secure and there is a safe handover of younger pupils to parents and carers at the end of the day. Supervision at break times is well organised, but the playground itself is uninspiring and the range of play resources and equipment is limited.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

**How effective are leadership and management?**

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The headteacher provides strong direction for the school and is instrumental in promoting effective safeguarding procedures. Staff ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, be they of a physical, emotional or medical nature, have full and equal access to all activities. More-able pupils, however, do not consistently have the challenge they need. With a clear vision for excellence, a newly strengthened senior management team and stable staffing this year, improvements and progress have accelerated. However, the role of the subject managers in checking and supporting teaching and learning is not fully developed. The school is a welcoming place and community cohesion is well promoted. For example, the 'Faith Street' project promotes good relationships among the various faith and cultural groups in school and the community. It also provides valuable opportunities for pupils to meet others from different backgrounds. A good range of partnerships promote learning well. For example, pupils have additional physical education lessons and computer work through links with secondary schools.

Value for money is satisfactory. The school is well run on a day-to-day basis; procedures and policies are consistently followed. The governing body has been strengthened and includes a good level of expertise to support management. Governors are aware of the need to develop consultations with parents and carers in order to involve them more widely in school life and decision making.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to the Reception classes are below the levels typical for their



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age and often well below in communication, language and literacy, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their progress is satisfactory and, by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's attainment is just below average. This is an improvement on previous years. Personal and social development is a strength and children's good behaviour was very evident during the inspection.

Children's progress is assessed frequently and tasks are planned effectively to build on developing knowledge and skills. There is a good balance between occasions when learning is in short, focused sessions with an adult and those times when children choose their own activities. Improvements to the indoor accommodation mean that children have free access across both classrooms with a wide range of activities on offer. Small outdoor spaces are located at each end of the Reception area. At present, there are insufficient opportunities for purposeful play and exploration in the outdoor classrooms. In addition, the activities that are arranged are not always integrated into the main theme and so do not provide opportunities for children to practise and apply the skills they are learning. Management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Leaders have a realistic view of the strengths in provision and learning and what needs improving. Plans have been drawn up to improve the outdoor classrooms but have not yet been put into action. Welfare arrangements are good and the building is secure. Good links with the children's centre, and parents and carers, help children to settle into school and transition arrangements into Key Stage 1 ensure good continuity of learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents and carers have positive views of the provision and learning and the majority agree that their children's experience of school is a happy one. They appreciate the 'great changes' made to the school recently and feel that staff are approachable. Comments include, 'The staff care for children extremely well,' and, 'The school meets each child's needs.' Parents and carers feel that behaviour is good and the school environment is safe. Inspectors agree with their views.

A minority raised concerns about communications and the school's procedures for taking account of their views. The inspection team agrees with the concerns. The staff and governors are aware of these issues and are looking at ways to develop the home-school partnership further. The very few other concerns that were raised were

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investigated fully and findings are commented on in the report, where appropriate.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St James' Church of England Primary School Blackburn 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 inspection team received 229 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 398 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	54	96	42	7	3	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	104	46	108	48	12	5	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	88	39	102	46	27	12	7	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	80	36	121	55	14	6	6	3
The teaching is good at this school	96	44	108	49	11	5	5	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	28	128	57	28	13	6	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	38	122	55	13	6	3	1
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)	82	39	105	50	18	9	6	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	33	122	57	10	5	11	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	76	35	122	56	11	5	10	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	30	115	53	24	11	14	6
The school is led and managed effectively	67	31	130	61	9	4	8	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	96	44	110	50	5	2	8	4

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



14 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St James' Church of England Primary School, Blackburn, BB1 8EN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and me when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

St James' Church of England Primary is a safe and happy school that provides you with a satisfactory education. Your behaviour is good and you get on extremely well together. You are a credit to your families and your school. I would like to say thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with the inspectors. You are delighted with your school. It's good to know that 'the teachers are very kind and help you when you're stuck'. Lots of you say you 'like the fun clubs' and opportunities 'to be sporty'. I think those of you on the school council, the prefects, house captains and others with responsibilities do a good job in helping to run the school day and make decisions. You are keen to learn and work hard.

Those of you in Reception class have settled well and are learning to be independent. I have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for learning outside. I think you will enjoy that because I saw how much you enjoyed your activities in the fresh air.

In Years 1 to 6 you are making better progress and have improved your work. Well done! I think you can do even better in writing and mathematics, especially those of you who find your work easier than most. I have, therefore, asked your teachers to give you some extra challenges and to check that your lessons keep you interested and motivated. You can help by continuing to work hard.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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