

St Barnabas C of E (C) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120187
Local Authority	Leicester
Inspection number	339626
Inspection dates	14–15 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Alan Bowles
Headteacher	Ms S Poole
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited thirteen lessons and held meetings with the chair and vice-chair of governors, the headteacher, other staff representatives and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, for example that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation and information to track pupils' progress. Parent, staff and pupil questionnaire responses were analysed. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

the reasons for pupils doing less well in mathematics and science than in English, what the school has done to improve attainment in these subjects and with what impact

- the provision for pupils who have special needs and/ or disabilities and for pupils at an early stage of learning English
- the effectiveness of subject leaders in monitoring subjects across the school and mechanisms for accountability.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school with ten classes including the Nursery. Most classes are of mixed age. Children begin the Nursery in the September following their third birthday dependent on available spaces. They attend part-time, either mornings or afternoons. Parents apply to the Local Authority for admission to the Reception class. Most children transfer to the Reception class in the September before their fifth birthday and then attend full-time. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than the national average. The proportions of pupils from ethnic minority groups and those who speak English as an additional language are very much higher than the national average. Eighteen of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Almost all the pupils are from ethnic minorities, the largest being those of Indian backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities and with a statement of special educational needs is higher than in most schools. Most of these have learning difficulties.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It is an improving school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and praise the staff for their commitment. One parent wrote, 'The school is very nice and the staff are very helpful.' Care, support and guidance are outstanding. The staff demonstrate excellent care and concern for the pupils and always have their best interests at heart. This is a happy school where relationships between staff and pupils are very good. One member of staff wrote, 'This is the happiest and most fulfilled I have ever been.' A pupil commented, 'It's a great school and I am happy.'

The pupils obtain great pleasure from their school life. They get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the practical approaches help the children to learn English in enjoyable ways. Pupils in the school have an excellent understanding of keeping themselves safe and the very good relationships with staff enable them to feel very safe. Many pupils exercise regularly in the after school activities and they know the importance of having a balanced diet.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. They attain more highly and make better progress in English than in mathematics and science, although there have been recent improvements in mathematics as a result of more attention being given to able pupils. Science remains the weakest subject and the unvalidated results in attainment for this subject remain below average. The progress of a few pupils throughout the school in science is not effective because they do not have enough opportunities to plan their own investigations and staff are not consistent in the amount of time given to the subject. Teaching in different subjects is satisfactory overall, although pupils make good progress in their work in Years 1 and 2. This is because teaching in Key Stage 1 uses consistently good quality planning, target setting and assessment. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not always clear about their learning targets so they do not always assess their own learning to help them understand what to do to improve their work.

The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future. Self-evaluation is honest and detailed but in some instances over generous in its conclusions.

Monitoring of teaching and learning and subject leadership are largely confined to English and mathematics. Strategies to evaluate teaching and learning across different aspects of learning are not yet thorough enough and the range of methods to do this is rather limited. The headteacher leads the school well and has the good support of the staff who are working diligently to realise the further developments that are planned.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in science by:
 - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to plan their own investigations and the means to record their results
 - making sure that all staff give enough time to this aspect of learning
 - appointing a science leader to oversee and lead the subject.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - raising staff's expectations of the quality of presentation so that it is consistent in different year groups
 - using assessment more effectively to match work to pupils' needs
 - improving the consistency in planning lessons so that pupils are clear about the expectations for the success in their learning
 - ensuring that pupils in Years 3 to 6 understand their short term improvement targets so that these are more meaningful to them.
- Develop a clear strategy for monitoring teaching and learning so that:
 - best practice is shared more effectively across the school
 - there is a clear plan and criteria for monitoring teaching and learning across subjects
 - staff improve their skills in observing and monitoring progress.
- 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

Overall pupils make satisfactory progress. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6, although with variations between subjects. Pupils make best progress in English. There have been noticeable improvements in writing as a result of staff training and the adoption of fresh approaches. Achievement in writing has been significantly above expected levels for the last three years. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is now also catching up. In lessons seen, there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan their investigations in science, which limits their attainment. For example, in a potentially exciting lesson for older pupils that involved pupils making parachutes to land a box of eggs safely, the teacher gave them too much direction about how to plan the activity and the methods to use to record their measurements. Evidence of the current Year 6 pupils' attainment indicates that the trend of improving standards in mathematics is being maintained. Progress made by boys and girls is similar. Pupils develop effective skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use these well across the curriculum.

Pupils make good progress and develop positive attitudes in Key Stage 1 in all areas of

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their work because of the imaginative teaching and the visual approaches used in lessons that support learning and the pupils' acquisition of English. In one lesson, pupils were engrossed as they programmed a small robot to visit different scenes in sequence that were laid out on the floor to re-enact the events of the Christmas story which supported both their thinking and speaking skills. Such factors result in markedly rising attainment in all areas of their learning. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is broadly average. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to other pupils. Pupils who have little English when they begin school make significant strides forward in developing their speaking skills and understanding of English.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and attendance is above average. As one pupil said, 'My school is full of friends and I never feel upset.' They have an excellent and very mature knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or mobile phones. Road safety officers, chosen from among the pupils, keep other pupils aware of road safety matters. Pupils get on very well together and behave well. They demonstrate good attitudes in class and listen attentively. Pupils undertake their responsibilities conscientiously. They make a good contribution to the school community and are thoughtful of others. For example, the school council meets regularly and arranges fund raising events to support needy causes. They have been instrumental in getting the school toilets refurbished and decided on the playground markings. Pupils are reflective and attentive in assemblies and show a genuine respect for others' faiths and cultures. Pupils take an active part in the extra-curricular opportunities which contributes to their healthy lifestyles. Pupils are soundly prepared for their future education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

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

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	
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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff have very good relationships with pupils and foster a pleasant learning atmosphere and good learning environments. They manage the pupils well. Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Recently significant improvements have been made in pupils' writing and mathematics skills throughout the school. The teaching of science is not fully developed in Years 3 to 6. Investigational work is occasionally rather too directed and so pupils do not have enough opportunities to make their own decisions. Pupils' targets are variable in quality, although they are exemplary in Years 1 and 2 because pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve. Elsewhere learning targets are not being used consistently and they are often too broad which diminishes their impact on pupils' learning. Teachers do not use assessment data well enough to plan work for pupils' different abilities in Years 3 to 6. The teaching of the 'reading recovery' programme is effective and pupils often make good progress as a result of this intervention.

A sound curriculum is in place. There is good provision for personal, social and health education throughout the school and this is reflected in the pupils' attitudes and the respect they show for one another. The school is at the point of reviewing its curriculum so that it relies less on published materials. It intends to plan skills for different elements of pupils' learning for different ages but this is still at a very early stage. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly sport, makes a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and to a healthy lifestyle. Effective partnerships with outside bodies inject a good contribution to the music, art and drama provision.

Pastoral care is outstanding. Staff are highly committed to the pupils' welfare and have an excellent partnership with parents. The school arranges meetings to help them understand different aspects of their children's learning and also to help them develop personal skills, for example in ICT. The school's website is very well developed to inform parents about the role that they can play in their children's learning. Transition arrangements for pupils moving between phases within the school and for pupils leaving the school are excellent. Arrangements for vulnerable pupils are rigorously established. Procedures for child protection are most thorough. Strategies and resources to support pupils who have very little English are very effectively deployed and enable them to adjust quickly to their learning. Partnerships with outside agencies are accessed usefully to support pupils who have specific problems.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>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</p>	
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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	3
	3
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	3
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The strong partnership with parents demonstrates to pupils the harmony between school and home and supports their emotional security well. This in turn helps the pupils to be receptive to learning. The governing body is well led. The school has effective safeguarding procedures and policies and the governors' role is outlined clearly in these. Governors play an effective role in the school and have a good perception of the school's strengths and its areas for development obtained through their regular visits. These enable governors to challenge the staff, to contribute to the priorities for further development and to the school's own evaluation of itself.

The school has relevant information about the groups of pupils which make up the school population to ensure that there are appropriate opportunities available for their interests in class and in the extra activities. Nevertheless, staff do not always ensure that the activities fully challenge the pupils to move their learning on.

Senior leaders are effective in focusing the school on its priorities for development. Consequently as a result of staff working together, improvements have clearly been made in pupils' attainment in writing and reading and also in mathematics based on previous performances. The school's own evaluations recognise the strength in English and the room for further improvement in science. There is still scope for widening the range of monitoring strategies and making staff more accountable for the progress that pupils make in the subjects which they lead to drive the school further forward and to ensure the pupils make even better progress.

The school has made a start to community cohesion and an unofficial audit has been carried out. An action plan is in the process of development. A link has been established with a contrasting school and the school seeks to establish a link with India, the home country of many of the pupils. Links with the local community are well established. The school seeks to establish a link with India, the home country of many of the pupils. Links with the local community are well established and support the pupils' good social development well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	3
	3

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	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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 join the school with skills and abilities that are well below those expected for their age. Many children have limited skills in English when they first begin school. The children make good progress in their general development and in their acquisition of English as a result of good teaching and the continual involvement of the staff as the children work. By the end of the Reception Year the children come close to or meet the expectations for this stage of their education. They exceed them in their personal and emotional development but are still a little way behind in their communication and mathematical skills. They broadly meet expectations in other areas of their learning.

The children work cooperatively together and develop good levels of independence in choosing their activities. They sustain good levels of concentration in these because the activities are made interesting for them. Sometimes the full potential of learning is not exploited well enough. For example, the 'telephone box' in the drama area had no telephone or directory to help extend children's learning, and some of the resources are quite worn. Group teaching is effective and includes work on the basic skills. Good attention is paid to letter sounds and the learning is made fun. The children jumped over 'stepping stones' across a 'river' saying the three letter sounds to make a word. Regular assessments of children's responses to activities ensure that work planned develops their learning further. Planning is thorough and covers all areas of their learning. The provision is well led and managed.

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

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Views of parents and carers

A much higher response rate was obtained from parents than is usually the case. The vast majority of positive responses indicate the overwhelming satisfaction with the school. There were a number of written comments, many praiseworthy ones, which supported their positive views. There was no theme in the occasional concerns raised. Two parents raised issues about security but the inspection evidence does not support these concerns. Occasional remarks such as lack of information about progress were counteracted by positive views from other parents about the same thing. The inspection team did not support the negative views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Barnabas C of E VC 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 inspection team received 144 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 298 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	64	50	35	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	80	56	62	43	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	68	47	71	49	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	41	77	54	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	44	77	53	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	62	43	76	53	4	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	43	77	54	4	3	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)	55	38	80	58	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	37	80	58	5	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	32	82	60	8	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	26	95	68	4	3	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	55	38	80	57	3	2	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	52	65	45	2	1	2	1

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.



16 December 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Barnabas C of E (C) Primary School, Leicester, LE5 4BD

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking to you about what you do and seeing you at work in your lessons. You obviously enjoy school. You behave well and your attendance is good.

We found your school to be a happy place and I know that many of you said this when you wrote comments on your questionnaires. The staff take excellent care of you and, as a result, you feel very safe. You have a good understanding also of making sure that you are safe by taking care of yourselves both in school and at other times.

The school provides a satisfactory education for you. We found that you make slightly better progress in the Reception year and in Years 1 and 2 than in Years 3 to 6. We also found that you do better in English than you do in science. Your mathematics work is improving. We have asked the staff to help you improve your work in science and to make sure that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make even better progress in the future through improvements to teaching and learning.

The school works hard to make your learning interesting. You do well in being able to speak two languages. We found that the staff do not yet do enough to make teaching and learning consistently good across the school. We have asked the school to take action to improve the ways in which they review the quality of work across the school so you make even better progress.

Thank you once again for your help when we visited. We noticed how keen you are to learn and we are sure you will continue to do your best. We wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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