

St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126380
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	340970
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Anna Sketchley

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	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jon Parkes
Headteacher	Mary Hiscock
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2006
School address	Drove Lane Market Lavington Devizes SN10 4NT
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed five teachers. No formal meeting with parents and carers was held but inspectors spoke to a few informally at the beginning of the school day and studied 41 questionnaires that were returned by parents. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, reports written by the local authority, documents about safeguarding and 50 questionnaires completed by pupils and 10 by staff.

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

- the ability of leaders at all levels to improve attainment and progress in English and mathematics, especially for more able pupils in Key Stage 2, for boys' literacy across the school and for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the quality of teaching and the progress of strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum in English and mathematics to improve the attainment and progress of all pupils and arrest some underachievement, particularly of more able pupils and boys
- the success of strategies to help pupils improve their work
- how well children in Early Years Foundation Stage achieve

Information about the school

St Barnabas is a small, village school that attracts pupils from a wide area. It has one class dedicated to the Early Years Foundation Stage and three other mixed-age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. No pupil is at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the majority of these have moderate learning difficulties. Among the school's most recent awards are Activemark, International School at Foundation Level and Bronze Eco-Schools. It is also designated a 'Breathing Places' school, with the Green Energy for Schools Award, and runs on solar-assisted energy. The school provides a breakfast club every morning and there is privately run pre-school provision on site.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Parents really value this exceptionally happy school where pupils achieve well. In the words of one parent and reflected in those of others, 'St Barnabas is a warm, positive school. The staff and headteacher are always cheerful and approachable and listen and communicate very well.' Despite previous significant disruptions to staffing, strong leadership and drive and ambition from the headteacher have welded together a capable staff team and supportive, challenging governors. Together, they all play a strategic role in the school's development. This has ensured good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the quality of teaching, which is now good, with some outstanding features. A rigorous system for analysing data and tracking pupils' progress is proving very successful in securing accurate self-evaluation and setting correct priorities that include challenging attainment targets for all pupils. Appropriate whole-school strategies to address previous underachievement, particularly of boys and more able pupils, have been implemented and are successful. As a result, attainment is rising and the rate of pupils' progress has accelerated significantly across the school, especially in writing. These effective systems and procedures ensure that the good rate of recent progress is being sustained and give the school good capacity to improve further.

Although some aspects of children's literacy and numeracy skills are below the levels expected when they join the school, they make good progress throughout Reception. This good progress is now maintained in the infant years, where attainment is rising. In Year 2, it is now average, despite a high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A focus on building vocabulary and an emphasis on story telling, with topics that interest boys, is closing the gap in attainment between girls and boys, although there is still more to do. The attainment of more able pupils is rising rapidly because teachers match work very carefully and plan challenging tasks for them. Evidence from lesson observations and from pupils' books shows that the rate of progress across the junior years has accelerated considerably and attainment in the current Year 6 is above average. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to check pupils' understanding thoroughly by asking them to explain their answers. Teaching and learning are supported well by an interesting curriculum that captures pupils' imagination, pays careful attention to the development of skills in different subjects and gives them many opportunities to practice their literacy and numeracy skills.

Pupils' good attendance is an indication of how much they enjoy school. The Christian ethos of the school is a cornerstone of the very positive climate for learning and excellent relationships that exist between adults and pupils and of their good behaviour and attitude to their work. All of these features are assisting them in making good

progress. The school has rigorous procedures in place to safeguard pupils and they are well cared for. This is supported by an excellent partnership with parents, almost all of whom are fully involved in pupils' learning and well-being. This is especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are supported effectively by the school and, as a result, make the same good progress as other pupils.

The school itself is a cohesive community and has good local links but its effectiveness in promoting community cohesion within the United Kingdom and globally is more limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress further by:
 - embedding strategies to improve boys' literacy, especially reading and writing at Key Stage 1
 - ensuring that teachers assess pupils' understanding more accurately in lessons by giving them more opportunities to explain their answers, especially in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion by implementing existing plans to extend pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom and beyond as a diverse community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Last year, the national test results showed that attainment in English and mathematics was average and that pupils were making satisfactory progress. The school's rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and accurate assessments and inspection evidence show that a high percentage of pupils are now making good progress and that the attainment of the current Year 6 is above average. Progress in lessons is often rapid and work seen in class and in pupils' books reflects a strong pattern of improvement as pupils move through the school. In all literacy lessons, there is a clear focus on techniques for improving sentence writing by gathering interesting words and phrases from a variety of sources. Pupils are developing well their ability to share and express their ideas because all teachers make effective use of such strategies as 'talk partners'. Both of these techniques are particularly helpful to boys and were especially productive in a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils when the teacher used pictures on the interactive whiteboard as a stimulus for writing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were challenged well at the beginning of a literacy lesson by working in pairs to write links to make complex sentences. This skill was then practised as the lesson progressed when pupils wrote recounts using interesting information from their history topic. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 use their literacy and numeracy skills well to collect results and write their conclusions while conducting an experiment on evaporation. With skilled help and good support from teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included and learn well in lessons. Throughout the school, almost all pupils listen well, concentrate and work hard.

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

Pupils are polite and well behaved in lessons and around the school, especially in assembly. This contributes greatly to the calm atmosphere. Pupils feel very secure in school and have a good awareness of how to keep safe. Those with particular behavioural needs succeed in this because of well-structured and effective support from adults. Pupils are involved well in the school community and enjoy their responsibilities around the school and in the playground. They are proud of the impact they make through the school council and were eager to relate how they had raised money for the people of Haiti in the recent disaster. Life skills learned through these activities and their good basic skills are preparing them well for the future. Through joining in the extensive range of physical activities offered at the school and fruit snacks, pupils demonstrate that they have a good understanding of the importance of living healthily. They enjoy being a part of the local community, visiting the church for festivals, singing to the elderly and taking part in the local village choir. While pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good overall, their understanding of cultural diversity in the United Kingdom, although satisfactory, is the weakest feature.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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

Almost all lessons have a brisk pace and are very carefully planned to meet the needs of all pupils, helping them make good progress. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards, especially at the start of lessons, ensuring that pupils are very clear about what they are to learn. Clear success criteria for different levels of ability are shared, which means that pupils can assess their own learning and understanding by the end of the lesson. Teachers' good and sometimes excellent subject knowledge and good questioning engage and challenge pupils' thinking. However, sometimes teachers miss the opportunity to ask pupils to explain their answers, especially in mathematics, so it is not clear whether or not some pupils have fully understood the question. Marking is a strength of the teaching. Pupils are given time to respond to the teachers' comments about how they can improve their work and many acknowledge this help in their books. All have regular targets to meet. These are other significant factors in the good progress they make.

The curriculum is planned well so that all subjects relate to the skills pupils need to learn. Interesting topics enthuse pupils and capture their interest. Innovative strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects are accelerating pupils' learning and are having a rapid effect on raising attainment.

Stimulating visits and visitors support the chosen topics in which the whole school take part at different levels according to the pupils' ages and abilities. For such a small school a very wide range of clubs is available to enhance and enrich learning and personal and social development, including a residential every two years for older pupils.

Pupils are very well known to all staff and the school looks after them really well. All procedures are extremely well organised and staff carry these out diligently. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well organised and pupils are given effective support that helps them to achieve well. Links with outside agencies for these pupils, for example through support from the school nurse, speech and language therapist and educational psychologist, are strong.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked tirelessly to improve the school since the last inspection and has been very successful. She is ably supported by the whole staff who are working in unison and learning and developing together. The impact of leadership on teaching and learning has raised the quality of teaching and it is improving strongly. Middle

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

leaders are enhancing their expertise by working with another, larger school to further hone their skills in observing and monitoring the quality of teaching. Governors are fully supportive of the school and more involved in strategic development than at the last inspection, monitoring its work and challenging it to improve further. They are knowledgeable about its strengths and areas for development and have efficient systems for meeting statutory responsibilities.

The school's own commitment to cohesion and its involvement with the immediate community are good examples of the way in which it promotes community cohesion at a local level. Because of a thorough audit the school knows that links in the United Kingdom and at a global level are less strong. However, they have made a new relationship with a school in different circumstances in a distant town and have recently been awarded the International School Award at Foundation Level through which there are plans to become involved with a school in Africa. These sound plans to improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultures and beliefs elsewhere in their own country and beyond have yet to be fully implemented.

There are effective links and a wide range of partnerships with outside agencies, particularly with the cluster of other small local schools and an independent secondary school which offers help with sport. Promoting equality of different groups of pupils is well managed and becoming more effective as progress improves for different groups. Good safeguarding procedures fully comply with statutory requirements and ensure that pupils are safe and secure in school. Regular training supports staff in carrying out their safeguarding obligations well and rigorous monitoring procedures ensure that this quality is maintained.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join school with skill levels below those expected in communication, language and literacy and calculation. They make good progress in all areas of learning because of good provision. By the end of Reception, almost all reach average standards. Good teaching and understanding of how young children learn lead to children making very good progress in some areas of learning, for example in knowing sounds and letters in readiness for reading. A very calm atmosphere, warm relationships and imaginative teaching support children's personal and social development. For example, as the teacher sprinkles 'silver dust', children form a circle quickly and quietly. They behave well and quickly become confident learners. Children make a valuable contribution to planning their learning that includes their own ideas and interests. Their progress is carefully assessed and used to plan the next steps in their development. A valuable record is kept in each child's 'Learning Journey' book and parents are invited to contribute to this. Both the outdoor and indoor learning areas are spacious and well organised, with a strong emphasis on tidiness. Although this enables children to find and put away equipment, fostering good personal development, displays of children's work are limited. As a result, the area lacks stimulation and colour and does not show children that what they have produced is valued. However, leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and welfare arrangements are good.

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 vast majority of parents and carers who responded are very supportive of the school. In the words of one parent, 'Generally teaching is excellent with a good balance of learning, respect, discipline and fun.' Of the very small number of concerns raised, most were individual issues. A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned about behaviour. However, during the course of the inspection behaviour was good and the school has effective strategies for managing it for all pupils. In addition, a few parents feel that they do not receive enough information about their child's progress. Inspectors spoke personally to a number of parents who were all very satisfied with the school's communication systems and felt that they were listened to and well informed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Barnabas 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 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 97 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	24	59	16	39	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	28	68	12	29	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	49	18	44	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	46	19	46	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	18	44	20	49	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	41	22	54	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	39	24	59	1	2	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)	18	44	21	51	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	69	23	56	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	34	24	59	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	37	22	54	1	2	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	26	63	13	32	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	51	19	46	1	2	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.

16–17 March 2010

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.



18 March 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of St Barnabas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,
Market Lavington SN10 4NT

I should like to thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently and for having lunch with me and spending time talking to me. I really enjoyed meeting you.

St Barnabas is a good school and you are making good progress in your learning because of the actions taken by your headteacher along with all the adults in your school. These are some of the best things I found.

- You really enjoy coming to school and your attendance is good.
- You know how to stay safe and are good at keeping healthy.
- You enjoy helping in school, behave well and get on really well together.
- Your teachers make learning fun for you and your attitude to your work is good.
- You are well cared for and you told me that you feel happy and safe in school.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. They know what needs to be done next and from the findings I have asked them to do two things to make your learning even better.

- Make sure the boys keep improving their reading and writing skills, especially those of you in Years 1 and 2. I have asked your teachers to ensure that in lessons you have lots of opportunities to explain your answers more fully, especially in maths.
- I would like your teachers to make sure that you learn more about the different cultures of people who live in the United Kingdom and in other parts of the world.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector

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