

Darwen, St Barnabas CofE Primary Academy

Knowlesly Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2JA

Inspection dates

19–20 September 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This is a very happy and caring school. Pupils thrive within a calm and purposeful learning environment.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Her drive and determination have led to better teaching and improvements in pupils' achievement over the past two years. The school is well placed to improve further.
- The quality of governance is good. Governors know the school well, visit the school regularly and hold leaders to account through regular meetings.
- Teaching is good and is characterised by good relationships, effective questioning and stimulating resources. Teachers have good levels of subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons that match the needs of most pupils. However, some of the activities that they plan do not provide appropriate challenge for the most able pupils.
- Additional adults deployed to provide extra support are effective in helping to ensure that progress for all groups of pupils is securely good.
- The school has developed a good system to check the progress of pupils across the school. They need to ensure that all most-able pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Effective leadership, high expectations and good-quality teaching in the early years mean that children settle very well into school life and make strong progress. Activities in the early years outdoor area have improved over time, providing a stimulating space for the children.
- Clear expectations, effective safeguarding procedures and strong relationships ensure that pupils are safe and secure.
- Parents are very positive about the work of the school. Leaders offer strong support to help parents make a positive contribution to their children's learning.
- Subject leaders' roles have improved since the school became an academy. They now make a positive contribution in supporting improvements in teaching and learning within their subjects. However, assessment of pupils' skills and knowledge is not as well developed in some subject areas.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information to plan activities that match the needs of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, particularly at key stage 2
 - developing assessment processes so that subject leaders of science, geography and history can check the pupils' progress in these subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has high ambitions for the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and governing body. Leaders' actions have led to improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement since becoming an academy. Senior leaders have established consistently high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour, which underpin all aspects of the school's work. They have established a friendly, welcoming and hard-working atmosphere in the school. There is a cohesive staff team who are committed to giving all pupils the best possible opportunities.
- Senior leaders are accurate and honest in their judgements about the school. They know what still needs to be done and have set appropriate priorities to improve the school further.
- Teaching and learning have improved because of increased expectations from senior leaders and governors, combined with an accurate system of evaluating the quality of teaching. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching in lessons and pupils' work and they provide guidance to teachers on how to improve their teaching. This has helped to eliminate weak teaching. High-quality training is provided to meet whole-school and individual teacher's needs.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established consistent procedures for tracking pupils' progress. This has played a key role in ensuring that teachers and governors are clear about how well different groups of pupils are learning, including disadvantaged pupils and the most able disadvantaged. This information has highlighted the need to ensure that the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make better progress at key stage 2. Stronger teamwork and effective procedures for managing teachers' performance have ensured shared accountability for pupils' achievement across the school.
- Leaders use funding well to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Carefully targeted teaching for individuals and groups makes a significant difference to pupils' personal and academic progress.
- The pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. All pupils have an individual learning programme, irrespective of their ability, and this maps out the challenges and support needed to ensure that progress is good. Support is provided through additional small-group work, and for other aspects of school life such as financial assistance for educational visits. This ensures good progress.
- Senior leaders have made a good start in developing middle leaders' roles. For example, they make sure that subject leaders are included in activities which help them to evaluate the quality of teaching, such as looking at pupils' workbooks and participating in discussions about pupils' progress with teachers and senior leaders. As a result, subject leaders have good opportunities to view of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. However, for leaders of science, geography and history, assessment is not effective in giving leaders an accurate picture of pupils' progress.
- Pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that has been well planned to ensure that there is appropriate breadth and balance across all subjects. The leadership team are keen to

develop what is already a good curriculum. A wide range of carefully planned additional activities, including visits and clubs, make a valuable contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Residential trips in Years 5 and 6 help to develop confidence and independence. Singing is of a high standard and the school is rightly proud of their choir, who have sung at Blackburn Cathedral and the Tower Ballroom in Blackpool.

- The primary physical education and sport funding is used well. Pupils enjoy the regular teaching provided by external sports coaches and the wider range of sporting opportunities now available to them. Involvement in these activities has a very positive impact on their general health and well-being.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are active links to understand all faiths and cultures. For example, the school has a link with St James CofE Primary, Haslingden, which serves children from a different faith culture. Pupils from Year 5 spoke with great empathy about a visit from a group of Muslim refugees to talk about their life and faith. Pupils are respectful of one another and have a good understanding of different cultures and faiths.
- Key values, including fundamental British values, are taught well. Pupils have a good understanding of the democratic process and a respect for law and order. They value the contribution that different communities make to British life and understand about the different lives that people live in the city and the countryside.
- Leaders work positively and constructively in partnership with a number of schools in the locality. The regular sharing of good practice and resources between schools in the local 'SIG 5' cluster of schools has made a valuable contribution to the school's development. There are good links with the local church and pupils look forward to the regular visits from the local Reverend who regularly leads worship.
- The multi-academy trust effectively supports the school on a range of improvements. It is very committed to the autonomy of the school and understands the quality of the leadership.
- Parents, governors and staff recognise the substantial improvements in the school's work since the school became an academy and express strong confidence in the school's leadership.

Governance of the school

- Arrangements for governance are strong and effective because governors make a strong contribution to the school's development. They work closely and productively with school leaders and with other members of staff
- Governors provide good levels of support and challenge. Accurate and reliable assessments of pupils' progress, regular presentations to governors and governors' attendance at meetings about pupils' progress all contribute to the increasingly effective role played by the governing body
- Governors are keen to develop their skills through training and there is a clear desire to evaluate their own practice effectively
- Governors play an important role in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. They visit the school regularly to audit arrangements and check that appropriate support is in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe

- Governors are understandably proud of the improvements in the school's work. However, they are not complacent and are clear about further improvements needed.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school has robust systems in place to safeguard pupils. Pupils' safety is at the heart of school life. Leaders have created a culture where safeguarding is seen as everyone's responsibility, and this ensures that all staff know what to do if they have concerns about any pupil.
- Leaders ensure that recruitment checks are rigorously maintained. Adults are well qualified in safeguarding procedures and alert to children's needs. They value pupils' views and listen carefully to their comments. This makes a strong contribution to pupils' confidence and to their sense of security.
- All staff follow the school's safeguarding procedures and understand their shared responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Staff are given regular training in child protection matters and have undertaken 'Prevent' duty training.
- Leaders maintain good links with agencies, such as children's services and behavioural support services, and put specialist advice into practice in school to support pupils' well-being.
- Parents are extremely positive about how safe and happy their children feel at school. All the pupils who spoke with the inspector agreed that they feel safe at school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and assessment has improved in all year groups and subjects since the school became an academy. Leaders' high expectations are leading to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is now consistently good in all areas. As a result, pupils are making good progress in all key stages.
- The pupils understand that they have to work hard in each and every lesson. They try their best, cooperate well in learning and take pride in the presentation of their work.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and questioning is used skilfully to check pupils' understanding and to give them an opportunity to explain their answers. Teachers are good at using questions to make pupils think deeply about their learning. For example, Year 1 pupils used pictures to accurately sequence the events of a story, following skilful questioning which prompted them to articulate their thinking.
- Teachers are very skilled in providing activities and organising the learning to enthuse pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils were greatly excited as they responded to visual prompts which were used well to develop their understanding of the chronology of kings and queens of England.
- The teaching of phonics has improved substantially since the school became an academy. Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics confidently and effectively. Carefully focused teaching for those pupils who need extra help with their reading ensures that most pupils have secure key phonics skills by the end of Year 2.

- Teachers accurately assess pupils' learning. They meet regularly with senior leaders to discuss pupils' progress and attendance, planning additional support for individual pupils and making changes to teaching where needed to ensure that pupils continue to make strong progress. However, in some lessons activities for the most able pupils do not match their needs.
- Teachers are clear about which pupils are eligible for extra support provided by pupil premium funding. They work closely with senior leaders to plan learning for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have secured extensive improvements in the teaching of mathematics. Number and mathematics skills are taught consistently well across the school, building pupils' confidence and raising achievement.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support in all classes. They interact well with pupils, developing learning and supporting the progress of different groups within the class. They are skilled at ensuring that pupils are not overly reliant on the extra support being provided.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Leaders have created an environment where pupils can flourish. Pupils have good manners, speak politely and respond enthusiastically to instructions. The atmosphere throughout the school is calm and purposeful. Pupils have positive attitudes in lessons, try hard and persevere when given work that is challenging.
- Older pupils have a number of responsibilities for the smooth running of their school, such as: playground leaders; head boy and girl; and the school council. They care about others and go out of their way to ensure that anyone feeling left out at breaktime is given good support. Not only do they care for the welfare of each other, they also care for people around the world. During one of their daily assemblies pupils reflected deeply in their prayers for the plight of the Rohingya Muslims and looked forward to World Peace Day.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school. They appreciate the kindness that teachers show to them. Parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire stated that their children were happy at school. This view was borne out by observation during the inspection.
- The strong emphasis on helping pupils to stay safe online has worked well. Discussions with pupils of different ages show that they have a good understanding of how to use the internet safely and what to do if they have any concerns. They receive regular training through lessons in the school curriculum, school assemblies and through presentations from visitors to the school.
- Pupils show great pride in their school. This is shown in the way that classrooms are kept tidy, the school grounds are well cared for, and movement around school is calm and orderly.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, kind and considerate. Pupils disapprove of any misbehaviour that they see in other pupils. Behaviour in lessons is excellent, and this is maintained as pupils move around school, sit in the dining room and play at breaktimes.
- In lessons, pupils are eager to learn and willing to work hard. They enjoy their learning and are very keen to help each other to overcome problems.
- Parents, staff and pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare, a view confirmed by school records. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying. Pupils have very high standards of how they expect others to behave in school and say that no bullying of any sort is acceptable. Pupils are concerned to ensure that no cyber bullying takes place. Leaders respond promptly and seriously to any concerns about pupils' behaviour and well-being. Parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire feel that pupils are well behaved.
- Senior leaders and learning support teachers ensure that those pupils who find it more difficult to behave well benefit from consistent, carefully planned and good-quality guidance.
- Leaders have made significant improvements to the level of pupils' attendance this year so that it is now in line with the national average. Persistent absence has also been reduced considerably this year. Office staff report any absence issues to the leadership team quickly. Leaders responds swiftly if there is a concern.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The majority of children start school in the early years foundation stage with skills typical of those expected for their age, but an increasing number are below in their language development. From these starting points, pupils make good progress throughout the school. By the end of key stage 2, they reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are above national expectations and improving. The school is committed to ensuring that they raise achievement further, particularly for the most able.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years foundation stage. Lively resources and well-planned activities, both indoors and out, mean that they are excited and eager to learn. Children are encouraged to talk about what they are doing and to share and take turns as they play.
- Pupils continue to make good progress during key stage 1 so that, by the end of Year 2, national assessment results for reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average.
- Progress throughout key stage 2 has improved steadily since the school became an academy so that it is now in line with the national average. In 2016, attainment at the end of key stage 2 at the expected level was below the national average in reading. Writing and mathematics were broadly in line with the national average. The 2017 provisional assessment information indicates that attainment at the end of key stage 2 has improved in all areas and is above the national average at the expected level.

Nonetheless, only a small number of pupils are achieving at the above expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Since the school became an academy reading has improved significantly. Pupils get off to a good start in developing their reading skills. The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has improved recently. It was above the national average in 2016. This is a result of the effective teaching of phonics in the younger classes. A systematic approach has been adopted which, combined with good teaching, means that almost all pupils reach the expected standard. At key stages 1 and 2 pupils continue to enjoy reading and are making good progress. Parents are encouraged to share books and read with their children. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and appreciate the opportunity to use the well-resourced library.
- Disadvantaged pupils do well in all areas and make the progress necessary to diminish the differences between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally. The additional funding provided to support the progress of these pupils is being used effectively, so that they achieve in line with other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their differing starting points. Good systems are in place and the plans for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are detailed, and include challenging targets for progress.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are achieving well at key stage 1. However, the progress of these pupils across key stage 2 is variable and not all of them achieve their potential by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils are making some good progress across all subjects but the checking of this in science, geography and history is at an early stage of development.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress from their starting points in all areas of their learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased so that it is now in line with the national average. Children rapidly develop some of the key personal, literacy and numeracy skills needed to achieve well and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- The early years leader ensures that adults accurately assess the children's progress across all aspects of the early years profile and quickly identifies any who need extra help. 'Learning journey' records, including children's work and photographic evidence, show clearly how much progress children have made. Next steps in learning are identified and followed up to ensure that the children move forward as intended.
- Staff in the Reception class ensure that there is a balanced approach to organising the curriculum. Children are engaged in a variety of child-initiated and adult-led activities. For example, during the inspection a small group improved their mathematical vocabulary as they carefully drew spirals, spots and triangles. Another group were able to sustain their concentration in developing patterns using the interactive whiteboard. These activities are supported by more formal lessons, which are helping the children to get ready for Year 1.
- The early years leader has improved the use of the outdoor area to support children's

development since the school became an academy. The area is attractive and stimulating, offering the children a wonderful space to explore and work imaginatively with their friends. There is a wide range of appealing activities so that children have great fun while learning. As a result, children are active and involved and thoroughly enjoy school.

- Leaders make effective use of the extra funding for disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The money is targeted at an individual level to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed. Individual plans for both groups of children are effective in helping good learning to take place throughout the year.
- Children are keen to do their best and participate enthusiastically in activities and lessons. They are happy and well behaved, and show good levels of personal development. They play safely and take turns.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough, and parents appreciate that their children are safe. Children's welfare and safety are well catered for, with security given a high priority. The early years environment is a very safe and secure environment.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 141483 |
| Local authority | Blackburn with Darwen |
| Inspection number | 10036754 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 186 |
| Appropriate authority | Academy trust |
| Chair | Jen Frankish |
| Headteacher | Helen Thomas |
| Telephone number | 01254 702996 |
| Website | www.stbarnabasdarwen.co.uk |
| Email address | office@stbarnabas.blackburn.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.
- St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy is part of the CIDARI Academy Trust, which it joined in October 2014.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards. These floor standards are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- St Barnabas Church of England Primary Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below the national average.
- The school hosts a breakfast club and an after-school club which is run by an outside provider.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across the school. Three observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read during lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, other members of staff and a group of pupils.
- Inspectors met the chair and two member of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to the chief executive of Cidari Academy Trust.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school gate. In addition, they took account of Parent View free-text responses and 76 responses to the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, pupil premium funding, and PE and sport premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Andrew Morley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gary Bevin

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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