



Blackpool St John's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119595
LEA Blackpool
Inspection number 280607
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackpool
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, FY1 3NX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 625756
Number on roll	245	Fax number	01253 290685
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Gill Ward
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2005	Headteacher	Miss Jo Snape

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	Inspection number 280607
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Blackpool St Johns is an average size primary school. It serves an area with social and economic difficulties and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is housed in a Victorian building, which presents many challenges in terms of maintenance, organisation and access. A high proportion of pupils join the school after the usual time. Most pupils are from a white British Background and only two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school has gained several awards, including the Basic Skills Primary Quality Mark, and Investors in People. The school operates an After-School and Holiday Club.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. This matches the school's own view and the overwhelming opinion of parents and pupils. The school gives good value for money. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for all of its pupils. The school has been successful in enabling all pupils to do as well as they can and good teaching has resulted in recent improvements in the achievement of pupils and their good attitudes to learning. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good and they make good progress although they have no ready access to an outdoor play area.

The school recognises the need to take steps to improve the quality of children's reading and writing in the infants and to extend the opportunities for all pupils to develop greater understanding in maths by investigating and solving problems. The school's efforts have improved attendance, though it is still below average.

The enthusiasm and drive of the headteacher and her deputy lead the work of the school well. This has resulted in good improvements in the issues raised in the last inspection, and the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading and writing in Year 2, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to solve and investigate mathematical problems through the school.
- Improve attendance.
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Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. The results of the 2004 national tests for the oldest pupils showed that standards were well above average. This achievement placed the pupils' progress in the top one per cent of schools nationally. This was a significant improvement from the previous year standards, which were below average. The results for 2005 showed that this improvement was sustained overall though standards were higher in English and science than in mathematics. The rise in standards is due to the high quality of teaching in Year 6, the extensive support for pupils with learning difficulties throughout the school, and additional classes in Years 3 to 6. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet or exceed the challenging targets that the school has set.

Children enter the Reception Year with a range of skills, but their initial attainment is well below average for their age. They make good progress in Reception, but many enter Year 1 with below average attainment. By the end of Year 2 pupils have made

satisfactory progress since they started school. However, in 2005, results in national tests were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics because of disruptions in staffing during the year. Inspection evidence shows pupils are now working closer to the expected level but higher attaining pupils need more challenging work to help them to exceed the level expected of an average pupil. Pupils with learning difficulties receive very good support and achieve well. The small number of pupils at the early stage of learning English also achieve well.

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Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and this matches the school's own view. Pupils enjoy school and are willing and keen to say so. They behave well in lessons and are sensibly aware of others when playing in the cramped playground. They benefit from very good conditions for learning and develop good attitudes to their work. The school works hard to forge good relationships and so pupils trust the adults and feel safe.

The school's successful efforts to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are firmly based in its Christian ethos and awareness of other world faiths. Thus the school recognises the need to prepare pupils from a mainly white, English background for life in a culturally diverse society. Pupils' social skills are skilfully developed by well planned opportunities for them to work with each other, and older pupils enjoy the responsibility of being a friend to younger pupils in the playground.

Pupils mature into responsible learners who benefit from the values and sense of responsibility the school instils in them. They are well aware of how to look after themselves and keep healthy and safe. They have a growing awareness of how to plan finances and make a good contribution to the community, by belonging to the school council, for example, and entertaining people in local retirement homes. Attendance is inadequate despite the strenuous efforts of the school.

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Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and this matches the school's view. Calm and purposeful lessons help pupils to learn with interest and enjoyment. In the few less successful lessons teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for more able pupils. However, support for pupils who find learning difficult is outstanding. Staff deal very successfully with barriers to learning that many pupils encounter. Learning is best in Year 6 where teaching is outstanding and pupils are inspired by the high pace of lessons. Teachers question deeply and prompt and challenge pupils in interesting ways that help them

to learn for themselves. Thorough assessment of pupils' learning means that teachers know the pupils' progress and what they need to learn next. Pupils know their targets - one boy explained enthusiastically how the teacher marking his work ticked his target if he had achieved it. This is a valuable step for pupils to take as they start to understand what they are learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is good. In the Foundation Stage the spacious classrooms and well-planned activities promote good independent play and exploration but there is no outdoor area. This adversely affects what pupils might achieve.

The extensive and varied range of out-of-school activities is much valued by the pupils. The staff give very freely of their time at lunchtime to provide clubs for the pupils and this also reduces the crowding in the playground. In their many class discussions, school council meetings, assemblies and in the schools displays pupils face issues about healthy eating and keeping safe and well.

The school is awaiting the outcome of its bid for a new building. The lack of a sports field means that pupils spend valuable lesson time travelling to facilities elsewhere.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding. This exceeds the school's own cautious judgement of this aspect. One of the strengths of the school is the shared commitment of teachers, teaching assistants, mentors and local agencies to ensure that pupils' well-being is paramount. The high quality support for all pupils is evident in their good achievement and personal development.

The school keeps a detailed and careful check on pupils' personal and academic progress. Staff seek to deal with or indeed remove any barriers to learning that children have so that they can move forward with confidence. Arrangements for child protection are thorough and systematic. The few pupils who display inappropriate behaviour are well managed, dealt with firmly and treated with respect and understanding.

The school council is a positive and active group of pupils with distinct roles, responsibilities and powers that work in the interest of all the other pupils. They are justifiably proud of working to acquire new equipment to use at playtime.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are both good, confirming the school's own views. Since her appointment the headteacher has worked with all staff to assess the quality of the school's work. This evaluation has helped to establish the school's strengths and

areas for development and to make future plans. The needs and well-being of all the pupils are at the forefront. A strong commitment to including the needs of all pupils in its work has been recognised by the local authority. The regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning by the headteacher, and increasingly by other staff, is helping to raise standards. However, difficulties created by staff changes in the last school year caused a fall in standards in Year 2 last term. Staffing is now stable and the school is now vigilant in providing quick support.

The deputy headteacher is assisting the headteacher to improve the effectiveness of other staff with management responsibilities. They now need to assume a greater role in monitoring and evaluating standards and achievement to bring about further improvements. All issues raised in the last inspection have been addressed well and the school has the management structures and skills in place to continue the improvements.

The governors make a good contribution to the school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and needs and have good links with classes and teachers. They support the work of the school and governors challenge the headteacher to explain pupils' progress and major financial proposals. The school consults parents regularly through questionnaires and finds pupils' views from discussions and the school council. All consultations reveal an overwhelming support and satisfaction with the work of the school.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Blackpool St John's Church of England Primary School
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7 October, 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for making Mrs Hiscock and myself so welcome when we visited you this week. You were so very friendly and polite. Whenever we had chance to speak to you, you let us know how much you like school.

We were impressed with how well you behaved in class and how sensibly and carefully you moved about in the small playground, enjoying your games but trying not to bump into other children. The children you voted for on the school council have worked hard to explain to Miss Snape what you would like in the playground. I know you already have some of the games you asked for.

The children who have just gone to secondary school did very well in their tests in Year 6 because they worked hard and had a lot of good teaching and help. I hope that you all take notice of the targets your teachers have given you in your books so that you too can do your best. We saw how well all the adults looked after you and how the teachers tried to make your lessons interesting so that you can learn well.

We have asked your teachers to help you to learn even better by giving children in the infants more chances to improve their reading and writing, and by giving all children more problems to work on in mathematics. All the children we spoke to said they liked school but some of you do not come to school every day when you should. We have asked Miss Snape to keep on reminding you how important it is for you to come to school and I hope you will listen carefully to what she says.

Thank you again and good luck with your learning

Mrs Herring

Inspector

Annex B