

# Our Lady and St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lostock Hall

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119639
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379861
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 February 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Andrew Morley

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Kevin Lyth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline McNally
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Lourdes Avenue Lostock Hall Preston PR5 5TB
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Andrew Morley  
Chris Maloney

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 10 lessons and parts of lessons, taught by nine teachers, including a high level teaching assistant. Meetings were held with pupils, nine members of the governing body, subject leaders and senior staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, internal and external pupil progress data, school improvement planning and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. The inspector also took account of 64 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 68 completed by pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2, and 16 returned by teaching and support staff. No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available when planning the inspection.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well-below average; the number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below average. The school met the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, in 2011. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2010. The school has been awarded the Activemark, a Design and Technology Quality Mark, and has achieved Healthy Schools status. There is a pre-school group which is subject to separate inspection. The report may be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. When children enter school their skills are generally below those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that the majority enter Year 1 having made good progress in each of the six areas of learning. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment has increased year-on-year and is broadly average. Attainment is rising and increasingly above average, with good progress being made overall. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils. The school recognises that there is the potential to improve the attainment being made by some of the higher-attaining pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good and improving. Teaching has many strengths, and relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are strong. Teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in the core subjects, is a strength and contributes to the good progress in lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and disabled pupils receive well-focused, additional support and make good progress from their specific starting points. There is now greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school but the school is aware that this needs to improve further, for example in relation to challenge, particularly for higher-attaining pupils.
- The behaviour of the pupils is good. Pupils behave well and show respect and interest in the views of others. They enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in their above-average attendance. All groups of learners spoke confidently about safety and demonstrated that they were physically, emotionally and socially very safe. A typical comment is, 'Staff care about us and make sure we are safe'. They say that bullying does not happen and are confident that staff deal with any worries or concerns they raise. Safeguarding procedures and practice fully meet national requirements.
- The leadership provides energy and drive and ensures all staff, the governing body, parents and carers and pupils share a strong vision to improve the school in all aspects. Aply supported by the deputy headteacher, the headteacher leads by example and engenders good levels of teamwork and accountability among all staff. Plans for improvement, which are supported by accurate quality assurance processes, identify

priorities for improvement in all aspects of school life. Whereas senior leaders have a good understanding of the qualities of the school and self-evaluation, subject leaders have insufficient impact on school improvement.

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

- Further accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - raising expectations and improving planning in lessons to ensure more-able pupils achieve higher levels in English and mathematics
  - ensuring they know their targets and how to reach the next level in their work.
- Ensure subject leaders lead the improvement of their subject by:
  - effective use of the accurate self-evaluation
  - monitoring and evaluating the impact of their subject
  - developing and leading continuous professional development of staff.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils' enthusiasm to do well and succeed makes a strong contribution to their good progress. They cooperate well with staff and each other, showing good levels of engagement in lessons. Pupils are rightly proud of their writing which has improved significantly. They demonstrate good skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and use computers with confidence. When given the opportunity they value and are skilled in pair and group work, supporting each other in their learning. The work in pupils' books, observations in lessons and school tracking data show that pupils are generally making good progress from their starting points that are below the expected level for pupils of their age. However, when expectation and tasks are not correctly matched to different abilities, progress is satisfactory rather than good.

Children enter the Reception class with skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics which are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning. Progress is maintained and by the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is consistently average in reading, writing and mathematics. This continues into Key Stage 2 with overall attainment being at least at the national average. Current attainment at Key Stage 2 is above average for the majority of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as their peers because of the focused support they receive.

Reading is a high priority in the school and lessons about letters and the sounds they make are taught systematically on a daily basis. This is appreciated by the pupils, who show increasing enthusiasm for reading and many read independently at home. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is average. However, the quality of provision and pupils' good attitudes to reading mean that currently many pupils display above average levels of fluency and most can read complex vocabulary. In Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and fluent readers and their reading skills are above average.

The school has rigorous systems to ensure that no group is underachieving. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy with the progress their children are making. As one parent commented, 'I am extremely pleased with the progress of my child, who is taught by a positive teacher, who is striving to bring about the best in her pupils'. Pupils' good application of basic skills across many areas of school life shows they are well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of teaching**

The great majority of lessons observed were good and pupils have a very positive attitude to learning. Meticulous planning, good subject knowledge, the use of stimulating resources, including ICT, and interesting activities motivate pupils to work hard in lessons. In the best lessons, teachers use assessment well to identify starting points for learning and precise questioning challenges pupils to think deeply. The curriculum provides the opportunity for pupils to connect their learning across subjects. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, accurate ongoing assessment of the progress which pupils were making allowed the teacher to personalise the outcomes for individual pupils so that pupils' learning was of high quality. In a Year 5 lesson pupils enjoyed learning and developing scientific knowledge about the world's rainforests and at the same time developed creative language to improve their writing skills.

Where lessons were less effective pupils are given the same task that does not provide for individual learning needs. In particular, challenge was not always appropriate to maximise the achievement of higher-attaining pupils. On occasions, therefore, these pupils receive work which does not require them to think deeply enough about the subject matter. However, good use of assessment to track pupils' ongoing progress leads to school leaders spotting underachievement quickly. Pupils are beginning to assess their own work, responding to their teacher's marking to show their understanding. Although they know their targets they are not always confident in how to respond to them and how to reach the next level in their work.

The school monitors the progress of pupils well, individually, in groups and in classes. It is, therefore, able to identify any underachievement rapidly and provide good support to ensure that pupils come back on track to meet their targets. Detailed feedback on lesson observations and the emphasis on focused professional development continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school. The majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive. Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and mutual respect abounds.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils say with confidence that they are safe in school and that their classmates, 'playground buddies' and the adults who work with them look after them well. Parents and carers agree and the great majority of those who returned the questionnaires expressed the view that their children believe they are safe and well cared for in school. A typical comment was, 'All staff are extremely dedicated to the well-being of the children.' Pupils appreciate the emphasis the school places on their safety and happiness and make particular mention of the support they receive from adults when they have worries or are unhappy. This is aided by the good health promotion and personal development work throughout the school.

The school council is an outstanding example of pupils playing a strategic leadership role in improving their school. Through it, pupils are active in their rejection of bullying in all its forms. For example, the school council designed, planned and led an 'anti-bullying and friendship week' which has been instrumental in all pupils having a positive attitude to 'friendship' and an understanding that bullying is wrong. Furthermore, pupils say that the school teaches them about what forms bullying can take and the dangers of each of them, for example, cyber-bullying.

During the inspection, pupils' conduct around school was invariably good and there were few examples of off-task behaviour in lessons. However, there were examples when pupils did not show the high levels of consideration on corridors and moving in and out of the hall. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are of the view that behaviour has improved since the arrival of the new headteacher and that pupils always represent their school in the local community with maturity. Pupils are happy, confident and secure in school and this is reflected in attendance which has been consistently above the national average. Punctuality is also a particular strength.

## **Leadership and management**

The relatively new leadership has brought a drive to the school. All staff, the governing body, parents and carers and pupils share a strong vision to improve the school in all aspects. Accurate and honest self-evaluation and an overriding concern, shared by all staff, to further raise standards and achievement mean that the school is well placed to secure further improvement. The capacity to improve further is, therefore, good. Senior leaders and subject leaders are being supported and guided in promoting improvements in their particular areas. However, this is at an early stage, and the leadership of the school understands the need for subject leaders to take the initiative to lead the improvements. The governing body is fully supportive of the school's direction for development and members challenge leaders with increasing rigour. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and has effective strategies to tackle discrimination on the rare occasions this may occur. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are secure, regularly reviewed, and fully meet national requirements. Engagement and communication with parents and carers are excellent, and as a result, an overwhelming proportion of parents and carers appreciate the dedication and contribution of the school and its staff.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a good variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which are popular and well attended. Pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about visits such as one to a recycling centre and the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language. Pupils are learning French and the standard is very high. The key skills of reading, writing and numeracy are prioritised in the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to develop writing across subjects have been instrumental in higher standards in writing at all phases of the school. The impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. However, the school recognises the need to provide the pupils with more first-hand opportunities to help them develop their understanding of other cultures which are different to their own.

Pupils benefit from good partnerships with a range of outside agencies and the local high school. The school is very active within a local cluster of Catholic primary schools and has good links with Edge Hill University. Relationships with the parish and local community are excellent. The school knows its community well and reaches out to meet the needs of all members of the community.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



6 February 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Our Lady and St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lostock Hall, Preston, PR5 5TB**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave the inspectors and for being so polite and kind when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you enjoying learning and the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that you are making good progress. Your teachers are working hard to help you in your learning and it was pleasing to see the improvement that you have made and that you are enjoying doing your topic work. Your behaviour in class is good and you play well together. We really liked the way in which the older children cared for and helped look after the younger ones. The school council is outstanding and you should all be proud of what the council is doing on your behalf. You know how to stay safe and many of you told us how much your teachers care about you.

Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do even better. To help them in this we have asked them to ensure the work set is challenging so that the more-able pupils achieve higher levels in English and mathematics. We have also asked them to ensure that staff help your headteacher by being the leaders of the different subjects that you study.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome. All of you are a credit to your school. Keep on being kind to each other; help your teachers and work hard to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Morley  
Lead inspector

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