

St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119666
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	358602
Inspection dates	19–20 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Leatham
Headteacher	Mr Gerard Keane
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
School address	Blackburn Road Darwen Lancashire BB3 0AA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who visited 13 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed seven teachers and held discussions with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Officer. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 117 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

- How effectively the school has worked to raise standards, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The impact of action taken to improve pupils' progress in Key Stage 2.
- How successfully the school has worked to ensure that more-able pupils are challenged effectively.
- The way the school has managed the significant changes in leadership and high turnover of staff over the last eighteen months.

Information about the school

St Edward's is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. There have been significant changes in leadership, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, and a high turnover of staff over the last 18 months. The school has Healthy School status and Eco School accreditation.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Edward's is a good school. It provides a stimulating and friendly setting in which to learn, firmly based within a caring ethos. The headteacher has been the driving force behind the good improvement made since the last inspection. He has overseen a range of initiatives that have accelerated progress, particularly in Key Stage 2,

raised standards and improved the quality of teaching and learning. Self-evaluation is accurate and gives leaders and the governing body clear information about how to take the school forward. Plans are put into place to bring about improvement but these are not always focused enough to enable progress towards their achievement to be measured accurately. The school has successfully managed the changes in leadership and turnover in staffing to minimise any disruption to pupils' learning. Target-setting related to pupils' progress and attainment is realistic and challenging and is based on good-quality data. As a result, leaders have been successful in making and sustaining improvements and the capacity for further improvement is good.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school. As a result, standards are broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards are continuing to rise and inspection evidence suggests that pupils currently in Year 6 are on track to attain above-average standards in these subjects by the time they leave school. These improvements stem from teachers giving pupils more effective guidance on how to improve, providing a better level of challenge, especially for more-able pupils, and ensuring well-targeted support for those pupils in danger of falling behind. In mathematics, pupils' problem-solving skills are a weaker aspect of their performance.

Pupils show a great deal of enjoyment in coming to school, which is reflected in their high rate of attendance. They behave well and have positive attitudes, which contribute well to their good learning and development. Consistently good or better teaching is a key factor in the progress that pupils make. Relationships are good and lead to a calm and purposeful atmosphere in all classrooms.

The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of good-quality enrichment activities, including well-attended extracurricular activities. It successfully meets the needs of different groups of pupils and provides imaginative and effective opportunities for learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to the outdoor area throughout the day but its organisation and use do not fully support their development and learning. The care and well-being of pupils is at the heart of the school's work and this is much appreciated by parents and carers.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on pupils' good achievement in mathematics by improving their problem-solving skills.
- Ensure that plans for improvement are always tightly focused so that progress towards achieving them can be measured accurately.
- Improve the organisation and use of the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to better support their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement from their skill levels on entering school, which are generally below those expected for their age, is good. They are keen to learn and carry out their activities enthusiastically. Pupils work well together in pairs and small groups and are willing to persevere when faced with difficulties. They confidently use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. This was evident in a lesson in Year 5 in which pupils were using a multi-media programme to create a presentation including text, images and sound. Pupils speak confidently to express their ideas and read with enjoyment. They write competently in a variety of styles across the curriculum. Pupils have securely developed mathematical calculation skills but are not as adept in applying these to solve real-life number problems. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as other pupils because of the well-targeted support they receive.

Pupils' willingness to take on responsibilities, such as being a school councillor, contributes positively to the life of the school. They also contribute to the wider community through links with the local church and taking part in local events, such as the Blackburn Cathedral Choir Service at Christmas. Pupils are adopting healthy lifestyles well by eating healthily and enjoying physical exercise. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and know that if they have any concerns they can talk to an adult and will be supported. Pupils' improving attainment, high attendance and good collaboration skills show they are well prepared for their future lives.

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

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	3
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage classrooms well so that little time is lost and pupils stay on task. They clearly explain to pupils what they are to learn in lessons and how to achieve success. Because teachers encourage them to assess their own progress, pupils are confident in evaluating how well they are doing and deciding what they need to do next to improve. Marking and verbal feedback is used well to guide pupils to the next steps in their learning. The level of challenge for more-able pupils has been improved since the last inspection and is good. Teaching does not consistently provide enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. Teaching assistants provide good support for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum is extended by a good range of educational visits, including to Towneley Hall and the City Learning Centre. A residential stay for pupils at an activity centre in Shropshire effectively promotes their personal and social development. Partnership activity, including with the local high school, provides enhanced opportunities to develop skills in music, dance and sport. The curriculum has been developed to provide better links between subjects. It is now being fine-tuned to ensure that skills are built on methodically in all subjects. Healthy School and Eco School accreditation shows the commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyles and an awareness of environmental issues.

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

Well-organised arrangements for the care of all pupils contribute to their good development and well-being and support their learning. Staff are clear of the steps to take if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Clearly targeted support for potentially vulnerable pupils plays an important role in fostering their learning and development. Good links with a variety of outside agencies ensure extra assistance is available for individual pupils, if required. The school encourages regular attendance very successfully. Pupils who have medical needs are supported effectively to ensure their well-being.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders enthuse staff and, as a result, morale is high and there is a shared commitment to drive up standards and take the school forward. Governance is good because the governing body is supportive of the school and proactive in evaluating its performance and influencing its development. Plans to bring about improvement are not always sufficiently focused to enable their success to be measured. This means that leaders cannot necessarily identify which initiatives are proving most effective and are worthy of being continued. The school promotes equal opportunity and tackles discrimination well. Leaders have detailed information about individual pupils and regularly check their performance and their contribution to school life.

Thorough safeguarding arrangements ensure the safety and well-being of pupils and staff. The training of staff in safeguarding, particularly child protection, is of good quality. Partnership activity is effective in developing learning opportunities that the school could not provide on its own, in areas such as sport and music. Leaders successfully promote community cohesion by encouraging pupils to view their role as not only members of the school but to consider their contribution to the local, national and international community. The school has a good relationship with parents and carers who receive regular information about their children's progress and achievement.

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

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and achieve well within a caring and stimulating setting. Adults work well together to plan activities that are practical and often linked to children's personal experiences. As a result, children are interested and engaged in all that they do. They are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and this contributes positively to their development as independent learners. Relationships between adults and children are good, which has a positive impact on the progress children make. Children play happily together, willingly sharing resources and also taking turns fairly. This was evident when they were uncovering objects in the sand tray and matching how many there were to number cards.

The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for children to work with a variety of visitors, including representatives of the emergency services. Children are cared for well in this calm and happy setting and support for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. Good leadership ensures that children's progress is checked well and that their individual needs are met. The leader has rightly identified the need to make more effective use of the recently upgraded outdoor area to better support children's learning and development. Parents and carers say that staff are approachable and keep them regularly informed of their child's progress and how they can support learning at home.

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

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

An above-average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. The very large majority were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. They were particularly pleased about how their children enjoyed school and how they were kept safe. One comment is typical 'Both our children have been very happy with the school and look forward to going each day.' A very small minority did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and other parents and carers do not think that they are helped to support their children's learning. There was no misbehaviour observed during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs. After considering the available evidence, inspectors judge that the school helps parents and carers to support their children's learning well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn 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 123 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	59	49	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	67	41	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	56	46	67	54	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	39	70	57	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	73	59	49	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	48	56	46	7	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	42	62	50	7	6	1	1
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)	60	49	54	44	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	43	64	52	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	37	68	55	8	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	37	69	56	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	72	59	51	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	61	46	37	1	1	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 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



21 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn, Darwen, BB3 0AA

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is good and that:

- you make good progress and your attainment is improving
- staff look after you well and make sure you are safe
- your attendance is high and you behave well
- you learn a lot in lessons and adults explain to you how to improve your work, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, such as to Towneley Hall and the City Learning Centre
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- improve your mathematical problem-solving skills
- use the outdoor area for children in Reception more effectively in order to better develop their learning.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely,

Melvyn Hemmings

Lead Inspector

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