

St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 119655 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 358599 |
| Inspection dates | 8–9 June 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | Tony Painter |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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| 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 | 203 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Pauline Firman |
| Headteacher | Margaret Borman |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 June 2008 |
| School address | Lomeshaye Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 0DQ |
| Telephone number | 01282 613906 |
| Fax number | 01282 611803 |

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|---------------------------|--------------|
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed different aspects of the school's work, including over nine hours observing teaching in all classes. In addition, they held discussions with members of the governing body, groups of pupils and staff and scrutinised a range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation, development planning and the school's assessment records. They examined questionnaire responses from pupils and staff as well as 80 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Around a third of the pupils come from White British and another third from Pakistani backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, although there is an above average proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has recently gained a number of awards including Healthy School status and the Racial Equality Mark. The school's Year 6 results have met or exceeded government floor targets in each of the last three years.

A voluntary group, St John Southworth RCP After-School and Breakfast Club, manages before- and after-school care in the school and is subject to separate inspection.

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 | 2 |
| Achievement | 2 |
| Teaching | 2 |
| Leadership and management | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety | 2 |
| Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being? | Yes |
| Does the school adequately promote community cohesion? | Yes |
| Does the school provide value for money? | Yes |

Key findings

- This good school has successfully maintained the momentum of improvement identified in the last inspection. Within a strong positive atmosphere, pupils behave well and have good preparation for future learning. Safeguarding arrangements are good and pupils' personal development is effectively promoted.
- Pupils achieve well from overall below average starting points. They get off to a particularly good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where many make rapid progress. Throughout the school, most pupils exceed the nationally expected rates of progress and reach their challenging targets. By the end of Year 6, overall attainment is broadly average.
- Underpinning this success is good leadership and management that gives staff at all levels effective opportunities to work together to identify and tackle weaknesses. Most action has been successful and some weaker areas, such as performance in mathematics, are now considerably stronger. Current action is successfully improving pupils' writing skills but teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils apply these newly gained skills in all their writing.
- Good teaching in all parts of the school ensures effective learning in lessons, helping pupils to gain skills and knowledge at a good rate. Teachers' high expectations and good relationships with pupils motivate and encourage pupils to try hard. Pupils enjoy their learning very much and speak very positively of how teachers help them.
- Teachers make good use of the school's accurate assessment systems to plan tasks that meet the needs of different groups of pupils. They ensure sensitive

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and effective support for any pupils new to English or in danger of falling behind. As a result, there are no significant differences in the pace of learning of different groups. However, further opportunities remain to tailor some tasks more sharply to pupils' abilities and ensure more learning at the very highest rate.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teachers further promote pupils' progress in lessons by:
 - sharing the best teaching practice currently evident within the school
 - ensuring that pupils make full use of their developing writing skills when undertaking writing in other subjects
 - matching lesson tasks even more sharply to the precise needs of pupils of differing abilities.

Main report

The school has a strong, positive atmosphere and is a harmonious place where pupils from a wide range of backgrounds work and play together very well. This very cohesive foundation promotes pupils' personal development well; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show good levels of respect and are considerate of others. They have a clear sense of right and wrong and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They know the school's Golden Rules, understand why they are in place and consistently comply with them. Pupils show a good knowledge of how to remain safe; they report that bullying is very rare and have confidence that staff would very quickly sort out any concerns. The school records any incidents carefully and these confirm that day-to-day behaviour is consistently of the good quality seen during the inspection. The school and the governing body are vigilant in ensuring all necessary safeguarding measures are fully in place. Parents and carers are very positive about all aspects of the school and many relate how it has been effective in supporting the specific needs of their individual children.

Pupils' overall starting points on joining the school are below those found nationally for their age. A significant number of pupils have had limited experiences before beginning school or are new to speaking English. However, all make overall good progress through the school and achieve well. Through each year, the large majority of pupils make progress faster than the nationally expected rates. The school takes good action to promote equality and tackle discrimination and effective strategies support any pupils that may be in danger of slipping behind. The school provides well-targeted support for those pupils who speak English as an additional language that ensures their good progress. Specialist support for those new to English is very effective in helping these pupils to play a full role in lessons. Reviews of pupils' progress also quickly identify any pupils who may have special educational needs and

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target effective strategies to address any concerns. As a result, these pupils learn well. These processes are effective; there are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils, standards are rising and gaps are closing with pupils nationally.

Well-established action has improved pupils' performance in Key Stage 1, where the Year 2 assessment results have been broadly average for the past three years. In Key Stage 2, the school successfully continues to improve standards, although it is still redressing past underachievement, particularly in the current Year 6. Although these pupils' progress has been good, their overall attainment remains somewhat lower than the broadly average recent test results. A very high proportion of these pupils have identified special educational needs. Pupils' work and the accurate school data clearly identify rising performance in subsequent years. The school reflects this in the increasingly challenging targets it is setting itself.

Teachers establish good relationships with pupils and clearly express their high expectations. Progress in most lessons is therefore good, with pupils demonstrating their positive attitudes and enjoyment of learning through their hard work and concentration. A particularly strong feature of teaching throughout the school is the extremely effective teamwork between teaching and support staff. Detailed planning ensures all are very clear of how to support pupils to make good progress. In many lessons, activities excite and involve pupils well. Year 1 pupils, for example, showed real delight when encouraging their snails to race towards a target. Suitably attired, Year 2 pupils braved the drizzle in the 'Forest School', concentrating well to seek out and record minibeasts and flowers. Year 6 pupils showed genuine enthusiasm for work leading to a performance of Shakespeare's 'The Tempest'.

The school's actions to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills have been successful, so that pupils listen carefully to teachers and others and they are keen to offer answers, thoughts and opinions. Teachers' consistent routines and organisation give pupils confidence and ensure little time is lost. Recent action taken to broaden the curriculum gives pupils more creative and investigative opportunities for learning, particularly in science. They respond well to these and identify them as one of the things they particularly enjoy. Pupils show increasingly effective personal and social skills, such as independence and cooperation. The school gives pupils many well-judged opportunities to reflect on their learning and the wider world, effectively broadening their spiritual and cultural understanding.

Early Years Foundation Stage children in the Reception class learn very well and get off to a very good start in their learning. Excellent relationships and consistent routines help children to settle and have confidence. A very positive atmosphere promotes effective learning and the flexible approach taken by all staff ensures a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. A strong focus on developing communication and language skills ensures that children, particularly those who speak English as an additional language, frequently make rapid progress. All staff work together very well and their enthusiastic approaches encourage a strong pace to learning and children's full engagement. A wide range of strongly-themed

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activities successfully motivates children in all aspects of their development and their overall progress is good.

Recent steps taken to accelerate younger pupils' development of reading skills through structured learning of sounds and letters are having a positive impact. Staff work carefully with small groups of pupils to support their particular levels of development. Elsewhere in the school, teachers use a range of approaches in regular lessons to improve older pupils' reading skills. These are particularly successful where teachers work directly with groups of pupils to understand the text they are working on together. Pupils develop broadly average reading skills by the age of six and by the time they leave the school.

Actions to improve pupils' writing skills also show positive outcomes. Strategies, such as 'The Big Write', are giving pupils a good foundation to tackle longer and more structured writing. They show real enthusiasm for these tasks and their work shows increasingly good quality outcomes. However, they do not consistently carry over skills gained in these sessions to their writing in other parts of the curriculum. Some tasks, in subjects such as science, give only limited scope for extended writing. In other cases, teachers do not always remind pupils how they can use their growing writing proficiencies in these other tasks.

Teachers' marking is generally positive and constructive, giving pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Pupils are very clear about their own targets and how they can produce better work. Teachers frequently use well their informal assessment of pupils' progress in lessons, carefully and successfully adapting tasks and questioning to push learning on. Most lessons make good use of teachers' assessments of pupils' earlier learning to match tasks to the differing needs of groups of pupils at different ability levels. Within this overall effective picture, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to refine and sharpen their planning in order to ensure that tasks match very closely the needs of different groups of pupils and hence promote even better progress.

The headteacher has clearly set out an ambitious vision for improvements and has successfully involved staff at all levels. She has built a strong and effective team with very clear shared values. As a result, staff and the governing body have worked together well to enhance provision and to accelerate progress for all pupils since the last inspection. The school is aware of how it can continue to widen the management roles of coordinators and members of the governing body. The school effectively establishes strong partnerships with parents and carers, the local community and other agencies, that contribute significantly to the provision for pupils and the progress they make.

Accurate monitoring and self-evaluation identify the right issues for development, with clear plans for action supported by well-targeted professional development. Action taken has mostly been successful. For example, attention to developing pupils' quick recall and basic skills has eliminated relative weaknesses in mathematics. All pupils now show confidence and excitement in mathematics lessons; standards are

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significantly higher and above average numbers of pupils reach the higher Level 5 by the end of Year 6. Similarly, concerted action has effectively tackled past high levels of absence so that attendance is now average, with much improved punctuality. These examples of effective progress indicate the school's strong capacity to continue to improve.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John Southworth Roman Catholic 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 203 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|--|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| Q1 My child is happy at school | 64 | 80 | 16 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q2 My child feels safe at school | 61 | 76 | 19 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can | 54 | 68 | 21 | 26 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs | 52 | 65 | 22 | 28 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after | 55 | 69 | 25 | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Q6 Teaching at this school is good | 51 | 64 | 24 | 30 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school | 44 | 55 | 33 | 41 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour | 41 | 51 | 34 | 43 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well | 46 | 58 | 28 | 35 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning | 47 | 59 | 28 | 35 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed | 45 | 56 | 30 | 38 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Q12 The school is well led and managed | 49 | 61 | 27 | 34 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |

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 | 46 | 48 | 6 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 47 | 40 | 7 |
| Secondary schools | 12 | 39 | 38 | 11 |
| Sixth forms | 13 | 42 | 41 | 3 |
| Special schools | 28 | 49 | 19 | 4 |
| Pupil referral units | 14 | 45 | 31 | 10 |
| All schools | 10 | 46 | 37 | 7 |

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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

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|----------------------------|--|
| 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 achievement of all pupils. ■ Behaviour and safety. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The effectiveness of leadership and management. <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. |
| 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.



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson, BB9 0DQ

I would like to give a big 'thank you' to you all for making the inspectors so welcome when we came to your school. Special thanks must go to those of you who gave up time to talk to us about your work and how you enjoy school. You told us about many things that you thought were good, and we agree with you. You all work hard in school, and you are right to be proud of what you achieve. Most of you say that you know what to do to improve your work because your teachers give you just the right amount of help. You behave well and you all get on really well with each other.

Yours is a good school. The headteacher, all the staff and the governing body make sure that you are safe and cared for very well. We can see that all the staff have worked hard together to make things better for you and it is proving successful. We saw how you enjoy your lessons and how keen you are to learn. So it is no wonder that all of you, including the youngest children, are making good progress.

One reason for our visit was to see if we can help your school to improve further. We have asked your teachers to make sure they plan tasks that are at just the right level to help all of you to make the very best progress in all your lessons. We have also asked them to make sure that you use all those new writing skills that you are learning across all your subjects.

I hope that you will help by continuing to do your very best in all you do.

Yours sincerely

Tony Painter
Lead inspector

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