

St Mary Magdalene's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119489
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	379816
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Michael Haworth
Headteacher	Julie Frazer
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspection team observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons, where eight different teachers were seen. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of parents and carers, pupils and the local authority adviser who is linked to the school. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, data on pupils' performance, development plans, safeguarding documents and records of the school's monitoring of its performance. The responses to 91 questionnaires from parents and carers were considered, alongside responses from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The impact of actions taken to improve writing throughout the school.
- How well teachers use data about pupils' progress to plan lessons that match pupils' different needs and ensure they are challenged.
- The effectiveness of middle managers in their leadership and management of subject areas.
- The quality of the school's systems for evaluating the progress pupils make.
- How far the school has in place all necessary policies and procedures regarding behaviour, pupils' safeguarding and their access to equal opportunities.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well below average. The governing body is responsible for the 'St Mary Magdalene's Sunshine Bar' club which provides activities for pupils before and after school. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed since the last inspection. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark.

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

This is a good school that serves its community well. Parents and carers give their wholehearted support. Good value for money is reflected in the positive outcomes that the school obtains, particularly in the area of pupils' personal development. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable are fully integrated and receive good levels of care and support that enable them to make progress in line with their peers. Pupils feel secure and know well how to live safely. They take a positive approach to living healthily and have a clear understanding of a balanced diet and the importance of exercise. Pupils' excellent behaviour and the positive relationships between pupils and with their teachers reflect their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attendance levels are high. Pupils make a positive contribution to their school and the wider community. They are noted, justifiably, for the high quality of their singing, which is a real strength.

Pupils benefit from teaching that is mainly good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are enthusiastic about their learning. There are some inconsistencies in teaching because good assessment information that the school holds about its pupils is not always used effectively in lessons. Here, teaching is satisfactory because there is not enough emphasis on challenging pupils of different ability levels. In recent years, attainment has been adversely affected by a legacy of underachievement. This has been successfully tackled by the new senior management team and pupils now make good progress throughout the school. Attainment is showing a rising trend and now is slightly above average. Writing, although average, is not as strong as the other subjects particularly among boys. The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has recently improved and is now good. Children make good progress in their learning and development.

The headteacher and senior team give a clear lead in driving further improvement. Other staff with management responsibilities have not yet developed the necessary skills to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in the subjects they lead. Nevertheless, the school knows well its strengths and areas needing further improvement and weaknesses in teaching have been tackled successfully. Self-evaluation is realistic and mainly accurate. It is used effectively to guide the school's development and therefore the school has good capacity to sustain its recent improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve writing skills, particularly those of boys, across the school by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing in subjects across the curriculum
 - raising expectations of pupils and teachers regarding the amount and quality of written work produced by pupils.

- Raise the quality of teaching overall to the level of the best in school by:
 - building on the examples of excellent practice that exist to obtain a greater proportion of good teaching and learning
 - ensuring teachers make more effective use of the information they have about pupils' progress and attainment to plan lessons that challenge pupils of all abilities to achieve the best of which they are capable
 - developing the skills of subject coordinators so they are better able to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects and the impact made on improving pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well and enjoy their work. Behaviour in the classroom is excellent and makes a strong contribution to the learning that takes place. Pupils listen attentively, and participate enthusiastically when given the chance to share their thinking and solve problems in pairs and groups. Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. Recent results of national tests in Years 6 have reflected satisfactory rather than good progress and some underachievement. The changes instigated by the new leadership team, allied to improvements in teaching provision have been very successful in tackling this. Previous gaps are being closed and attainment levels are now slightly above average. This rising trend reflects overall good progress by pupils throughout the school. The school has prioritised writing as this is not yet rising at the same rate as other subjects especially for boys. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other potentially vulnerable pupils benefit from the good quality support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants. They enjoy their work and they too make good progress.

Pupils respond very positively to the strong values that underpin the daily workings of the school. They are proud of their school and talk warmly about their teachers, reflecting the very strong relationships established. Pupils show great respect for all and gain a very clear understanding of right and wrong. They appreciate the opportunities to reflect and develop a strong sense of community relating to the school and wider area. The school council takes an active role in shaping the daily routines in school. A good proportion of pupils take part in the additional activities on offer. Pupils are equipped well for the next stage of their education, having developed excellent attitudes to school, reflected in their high attendance levels and their enthusiastic approach to learning.

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	1
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 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	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall; some is outstanding and a minority is satisfactory. All teachers manage classes very effectively to ensure that learning can take place without unnecessary interruption. Most teachers make effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils and help them understand new ideas. Where teaching is most successful information about pupils' attainment levels and the progress they are making is used effectively to match work to pupils' abilities. In these lessons pupils are sufficiently challenged and the pace of learning is brisk. When assessment is not used as effectively the interest of pupils is not always sustained. Although satisfactory overall, there are some effective examples of the use of assessment to match demands to pupils' abilities and in marking that ensures pupils know about their progress and what they need to do to improve further.

The newly established curriculum promotes good achievement because it is broad and interesting. Increasingly, it provides additional opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum. The topics used are helpful in motivating boys to improve their writing, but there are not enough formally planned opportunities in place to extend pupils' writing skills. The good partnerships developed with other schools and agencies are effective in extending the curriculum. Educational visits, visitors and the well-attended residential experience for Year 6 pupils enhance the curriculum further and ensure a positive contribution to pupils' personal development.

Good quality of care, guidance and support and the effective links between the school and outside agencies lead to a caring ethos and good personal development. The school's 'Sunshine Bar' club, which caters for around 16 pupils before and after the school day, provides a good range of activities. This ensures a purposeful, enjoyable and calm start to the day. Pupils who have additional educational or social needs are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result, they

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

overcome their difficulties and achieve well in both their personal and academic development. The rigorous procedures to raise attendance are most effective and attendance is high.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The headteacher, with the effective support of the senior team, gives a clear and strong lead in setting a vision for the improvement of the school, based firmly on increasing pupils' progress. There has been marked success in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders are very supportive. However, not all play a full enough part in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. As a result, some inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching and learning. Staff share in the ambition to improve further, and their morale is high. Targets are used appropriately to guide good achievement. They are increasingly challenging and pupils are reaching them. The governing body makes a good contribution by supporting and challenging the school. Along with school leaders, they meet well their responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for pupils. The school is careful in keeping a watching brief on the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those with additional educational or social needs. Any form of discrimination is tackled assiduously. The promotion of community cohesion is good. Careful plans ensure pupils' wider understanding of their own community as well as cultural and religious diversity. Although the effect of the school's contribution to community cohesion is not formally evaluated, a clear impact can be seen in the harmonious relationships throughout the school. The governing body is effective in ensuring that requirements relating to safeguarding procedures are fully met and systems for assessing risks are appropriately developed. They also see to it that financial control, planning and accountability are secure.

These are the grades for the 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

When children enter the Reception class, their skills are broadly typical of those expected for their age. Recent good development in the leadership and management means that this stage of children's school life is led effectively. Improvements in the outdoor area have had a positive impact on the curriculum and the quality of children's learning. However, one of the outdoor play areas has not been fully developed to provide the same rich opportunities provided in the classroom and the smaller outdoor area. Changes have led to an improvement in children's progress, which is now good. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and an effective partnership has been forged between home and school. Parents and carers particularly appreciate how children are taught to behave well, feel safe and are happy and enjoy their learning.

At this very early stage in their life in the school, a good emphasis is given to ensuring children settle happily and develop their personal skills. As a result, children are open and welcoming to adults and confident in their class setting and in the wider school. Teaching is effective because adults work together closely and the experienced staff know well how young children learn. They plan activities that children enjoy and undertake with enthusiasm. Effective strategies are used to teach reading and number skills and purposeful activities are used to encourage children to play independently and reinforce these skills. For example, when extending learning about numbers, children packed their 'lunch boxes' for a picnic, carefully counting the number of plastic food items they could take. Opportunities are provided for children to choose their own activities, both in the classroom and outside. At other times, activities are adult led to good effect, as when children practise their word-building and letter recognition skills. Such activities have clear purpose, and opportunities are taken to use these times to consolidate learning. As a result, good gains are made. Assessment systems are sound and provide an accurate picture of each child's development.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Nearly a half of parents and carers returned the questionnaire. This is higher than usual and reflects the positive relationship between school and home. The very large majority is supportive of the school, confirming the positive views expressed by those who met with the inspectors. Nearly all replies confirmed that their children enjoy school. Parents and carers appreciate the way pupils are taught to behave considerately and responsibly. Most say they are aware of their children's progress and are satisfied with their achievement. The comment, 'All teachers are friendly, approachable and attentive to the needs of individual pupils and the worries and

concerns of parents', is characteristic of the many positive comments. A very few stated concern about the recent number of changes in staffing, difficulties relating to communication with the school and worries about information regarding the progress being made by their child. The inspectors found that pupils are well cared for and found that the school works hard to include parents and carers in all its activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary Magdalene's Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	56	36	40	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	63	31	34	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	40	45	49	9	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	38	46	51	7	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	35	38	47	52	4	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	37	44	48	9	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	42	51	56	0	0	0	0
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)	35	38	47	52	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	40	46	51	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	34	50	55	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	30	49	54	6	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	41	45	43	47	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	47	44	48	2	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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

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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Mary Magdalene's Roman Catholic Primary School,
Burnley, Burnley, BB12 0JD**

Thank you for your very friendly welcome when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for their letters and for taking the time to talk to us. We found that yours is a good school. We found it interesting to watch and listen to you in your lessons. Your singing of songs from 'Oliver' and in assembly was particularly good. We also enjoyed reading your work and talking to you. You take your responsibilities very well and get on together exceptionally well. You obviously enjoy coming to school and this shows in your high levels of attendance and in your excellent behaviour in classrooms and around the school. The good care you receive and the progress you make means that you learn to live safely and healthily. This helps you to develop into mature young people ready for the next stage in your education.

The teaching you receive is good. This means you are achieving well and standards in the school are rising. You say that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you. You were very positive in your questionnaire responses, although a few indicated that you do not know how well you are doing. To make things even better, we have asked your headteacher to increase the amount of good teaching and improve your writing skills, particularly among boys. You can all help by continuing to work hard.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Jones
Lead inspector

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