



Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105337
LEA Bury
Inspection number 277339
Inspection dates 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Joe Peacock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rudgwick Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Bury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire BL8 1YA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 761 2026
Number on roll	136	Fax number	0161 797 3542
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr T Wright
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs D Kiernan

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 10 October 2005 - 11 October 2005	Inspection number 277339
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic primary school is smaller than average, though numbers have recently increased significantly, putting pressure on the accommodation. Almost all pupils are from a white British background, but there are a few from minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number of refugees and children from travelling families also attend and have help to learn English. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both below average. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The school is accurate in its own appraisal in most areas. Inspection evidence agrees that it is good, but judge's provision for care, support and guidance to be outstanding, rather than good. The attainment of most pupils is generally above average, with none significantly below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' performance in the 2005 national tests for 11 year olds ranked the school top in the local authority league tables. However, standards in writing lag behind those of other subject areas and there is no effective system for assessing pupils' progress in science. Teaching and learning are good. Provision in music is a particular strength. Children settle quickly in Reception and make good progress, achieving their targets in all areas of learning before the end of the year. Pupils of all ages, enjoy their lessons, behave well and their attendance is above average. The vast majority of parents are very supportive. They appreciate the quality of care and easy contact with their child's teacher. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and/or the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds and refugees take part in all that is offered. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is appreciated and valued by all.

The capacity for improvement is good. Most of the previous issues have been remedied. Parents' perceptions of the school are now very positive and provision for the under fives has been greatly improved. Improving resources and further developing the use of modern technology remain as ongoing priorities for the school. All classes are to have interactive whiteboard technology this academic year, for example.

What the school should do to improve further

The few most significant improvements needed to raise standards are:

- To continue with the good strategies to improve pupils' writing skills and plan even more opportunities for pupils to write in all subject areas.
- Develop an assessment procedure for science in order to give an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start Reception with broadly average skills. The very attractive learning environment in Reception and the good quality of teaching ensures that all children make good progress and quickly achieve the targets expected of them. The high level of support and care means that children do particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development and there is a good emphasis placed on promoting early literacy skills. The teacher compensates well for the lack of a designated outdoor area, using the playground effectively.

Standards are above average by the end of Year 2 with all pupils meeting their challenging targets. In the unconfirmed 2005 national test results, however, far fewer

achieved the higher Level 3 in writing than in the other areas. By Year 6, detailed school tracking records clearly show that all pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. In the latest national test results for 11 year olds, results rose for the third year in succession. However, pupils' performance in writing remains a weak element in English.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well against the targets set for them. Those learning English as an additional language, also achieve well. Music is a strength and the pupils' singing is a joy to hear.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and most work hard and try their best in lessons. Attendance figures are above average and few pupils turn up late for school. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. All pupils fully understand school rules, are polite and considerate towards others. They work together well in pairs or small groups and accept responsibility willingly.

The school council gives pupils an understanding of working together for the good of the community. Achievements so far include the provision of picnic tables and flower boxes in the playground. Finances restrict other projects on their wish list such as better markings on the playground. There are plans for council members to attend staff and governor meetings, giving them a valuable insight into the world of work.

There are close links with the Catholic Church and these result in good opportunities for pupils' spiritual development. The quality of singing in assembly is truly uplifting for pupils. Pupils' moral and social development is good. Through visitors, residential experiences and visits to places of interest, pupils gain respect for others and a good understanding of world and local cultures. Their knowledge of other world faiths such as Hinduism or Judaism is satisfactory. Celebrations such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year are covered well in assemblies, but learning is not always consolidated afterwards in lessons. As a result, pupils find it difficult to remember key facts. Pupils are actively encouraged to adopt a healthy lifestyle and know how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers use modern technology well to support pupils' learning and in the two classes with the new interactive whiteboards, teachers use them effectively to add interest to their lessons.

Teachers are providing a good range of strategies to improve the standard of pupils' writing. However, in some classes, pupils have insufficient opportunities to write in all subjects. In Reception, the teacher provides interesting role play opportunities and

the close attention of the experienced teaching assistant successfully encourages children to speak and listen. The writing corner has been moved to minimise distractions as children begin to write. Although the Year 1 class is very small, the teacher makes good use of the corridor area for creative tasks and role play. A career in medicine beckons for the pupil who gleefully administered an injection to her worried looking classmate in the hospital area!

Teaching assistants very effectively support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in class, individually or in small groups. The quality of teaching and learning for these pupils is very good. Teachers carefully assess all pupils' achievement and use the information it gives to plan challenging work for pupils of all ability levels in mathematics and English. However, the quality of assessment information varies considerably in science and rightly this has been identified as a school priority for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broadened by excellent opportunities to sing, learn to play a musical instrument and to speak Spanish. A good programme of personal, social and health education successfully develops pupils' knowledge of relationships and citizenship. The curriculum is kept under regular review with all subject leaders producing an action plan each year to address any weaknesses. Although care is taken to challenge particularly able or gifted pupils in lessons, the school does not, at present, have sufficiently detailed records of pupils in this very small group which would help to ensure that their talents are catered for by additional curriculum provision. In Reception, staff effectively use the playground to promote learning in all areas of the curriculum. Children enjoyed measuring how far they could throw a rainbow ball, for example.

Good efforts are being made to link subjects and to make good use of computers. For example, in a Year 1 science investigation to see if the tallest pupils were the oldest, mathematics and writing skills were employed. In years 5 and 6, laptop computers were used competently by pupils to research facts about the Victorian period. The curriculum is enriched by frequent visits to places of interest and well attended after-school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care for pupils is outstanding and contributes effectively to their good progress and to their enjoyment of school. Targets for pupils with learning difficulties are very specific and challenging. Parents are fully involved in helping their children to meet these targets and in the evaluation of progress.

Guidance and support for pupils are also outstanding. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils help all pupils to feel important and valued. The school's accommodation is impressively well maintained and clean. Pupils work in a safe

environment and playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised and free from aggression or bullying. All new pupils are paired up with a special friend to help them settle into school. Parents are very positive that the school takes good care of their children. In a recent questionnaire, nearly all returned them and virtually all had very positive feedback for the school. The concerns of a very few parents over homework and curriculum information have already been addressed by the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, at this stage of the school's development, are good. The headteacher has a special gift of being able to communicate and connect with people and is highly regarded by parents, staff and governors. Governors are delighted with the school's growing reputation and demand for places. Through her outstanding leadership, in partnership with the extremely able new deputy, much has been achieved. However, the key priorities for improvement in the current school improvement plan do not stand out as so many other lesser priorities are included. Criteria for assessing the success of the key priorities are not specific enough.

Good systems are in place for evaluating standards and monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. However, action as a result of this is not sufficiently focused on identifying strengths and areas for further development. The role of subject leaders is being developed effectively, following the many staff changes. The very effective management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a strength, enabling all these pupils to do well.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. The attendance of the chair of governors at senior management meetings is appreciated and welcomed. Financial management is outstanding and the school is in a good position to afford to expand the inadequate accommodation. Resources are generally good. Outdoor provision for children in Reception, a previous issue, is to be improved as part of the building programme in January 2006. The school has good relationships with the church, local community and with the secondary school. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

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Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

N/A

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. I am pleased that you enjoy school and think that you are all working hard in your lessons. I agree with you that it is a good school.

The things that I particularly liked were:

- your headteacher is doing a fantastic job and has made a tremendous difference since she came
- your teachers are good. They work hard and you are learning lots of new things
- the many opportunities that are provided for you to enjoy music, learn to play an instrument or sing
- the number and range of after school clubs provided for you all to enjoy
- the way the school gives you responsibilities, looks after you and cares for you all equally well
- the strong links that you have with the church and how beautifully you all sing in assembly
- the really nice way you all behave towards each other and your teachers.

I have asked your teachers and the governors to improve only two things to make your school even better.

- I would like to see you continuing to work hard in lessons to improve standards even further, particularly in your writing skills.
- Better systems need to be introduced to show how well you are achieving in science.

Thank you again for helping me so much with the inspection of your school. I hope that you will carry on enjoying your lessons and helping your teachers to make Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School even better!