



St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Ramsbottom

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105343
LEA Bury
Inspection number 277341
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Rosemary Rodger CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Queen Street Ramsbottom Bury, Lancashire BL0 9JJ
School category	Voluntary aided	Telephone number	01706 823645
Age range of pupils	3 to 11	Fax number	01706 823964
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair of governors	Mr W Mc Sorley
Number on roll	200	Headteacher	Mrs P Leatherbarrow
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School is situated in the village of Ramsbottom in an advantaged area. It has before- and after-school childcare and a part-time nursery with childcare in the afternoons. A well below average number of pupils is eligible for a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There are a very small number of asylum seekers, traveller and looked after pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstandingly effective school in which pupils make excellent progress. Standards are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science and almost half the Year 6 pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests and exceed their challenging targets. Pupils' excellent attitudes, behaviour and their clear enjoyment of learning are features of outstanding personal development. All pupils, irrespective of their gender, learning difficulties or disabilities also make excellent progress. Leadership and management are highly effective in supporting the social and academic progress of pupils. The school's self-evaluation was a modest appraisal of its achievements with which the inspection team disagreed. Teaching and learning throughout the school are outstanding. Provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent, despite some limitations of space in the nursery classroom. The level of personal and academic support and care is meticulous. Parents are kept very well informed of the role they have in supporting their children's learning through the detailed guidance provided by teachers. The value for money provided by the school is excellent. Exceptional improvement has taken place since the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve is excellent.

What the school should do to improve further

The school has no areas for improvement that are not already being dealt with.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school judges standards and achievement to be good. However, the inspection team judges it to be outstanding based on the analysis of standards and progress. Standards reached in the national tests in the past few years have been exceptionally and consistently high in Years 2 and 6, and pupils make outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Year 6 exceeded the challenging targets set in English and mathematics last year. Attainment on entry to the nursery is generally above the local authority average. All groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make rapid progress as a result of their excellent participation in lessons and outstanding teaching. Exceptional enjoyment of learning contributes consistently to the outstanding progress made by pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils gasped in amazement and sheer delight as they watched their school clearly emerge from the map as the camera zoomed towards it on the interactive whiteboard. Pupils spoke confidently about their need to work hard and the high value they place on their teachers' praise, 'teachers are honest with us' they stated. Comprehensive analysis of assessment information is used very effectively by teachers to ensure that pupils are working at the levels of which they are capable and that they are suitably challenged. Parents make a valuable contribution to their children's progress as a result of the clarity in the school's expectations of their role in supporting their children's learning at home and through their support in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy belonging to this school and their attendance is consistently well above average. They greet each activity with eager anticipation and can explain in detail why learning is fun, showing great appreciation for their teachers' hard work. Such positive attitudes underpin the high standards of work throughout the school. Pupils' excellent behaviour means that teachers trust very young children to behave sensibly as, for example, when experimenting with Mexican food or cutting up fruit for a salad, therefore greatly enhancing the richness and quality of their learning. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are exceptionally well promoted with all staff, creating an atmosphere of respect in which everyone is important. Pupils are confident and very aware of their responsibilities as well as their rights. They are skilfully encouraged to explore their own and others' feelings and show a mature sensitivity to others' needs. They know how to stay safe and healthy and also make a strong contribution to the community through the school council or their very good relationships, which mean that they work and play together in harmony. One explained, 'we're taught how not to be nasty,' and another, 'you see, we all just try our best'. Such attitudes explain the school's success in preparing pupils for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Excellent features include the innovative use of outdoor provision to teach basic skills and its impact on the pupils' enjoyment of learning in the Foundation Stage. In other lessons, clear explanations about what pupils are expected to learn, the reference to this in lessons and challenging questioning, result in very effective learning. Pupils are very highly motivated and contribute to discussions and explanations readily and with confidence. Teaching assistants provide very good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; they ensure they are fully included in lessons and because of this effective system, older pupils with learning difficulties are confident to explain their understanding of new ideas to the rest of the class. Teaching is very effective because it is well matched to the needs of all pupils. This is successfully achieved by the rigorous analysis of assessment data. Pupils are expected to recall what they already know at the start of lessons and review their work with each other at the end of the lesson. There is a very good impact on pupils' learning because they each have a book listing the targets they need to achieve to improve their work. This recently introduced system is highly valued by pupils. The regular communication with parents explaining what they can do to support their children's learning is helpful to parents and pupils alike.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

Learners are very well provided for by the curriculum and all achieve equally well. The innovative ways in which teaching makes links between subjects, such as science and English provide excellent opportunities to apply basic skills. Enjoyment was successfully fostered in the study of Romeo and Juliet in Year 6. Provision for literacy and numeracy is outstanding and well reflected in the exceptionally high standards achieved. Learners are very successfully encouraged to be healthy and safe through healthy eating and involvement in sporting activities. They are encouraged to take responsibility, especially older pupils who support younger pupils. Awareness of their wider responsibilities is very effectively fostered in their understanding of ways to improve the environment, for example, through the environmental club and in contributions to various charities. The curriculum is well enriched by a wide range of out of school sport clubs such as tag rugby, football, netball and handball.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides excellent care and support for its pupils, which enables them to achieve high standards, as they grow in self-confidence and self-knowledge year by year. Arrangements to ensure child protection are thorough and, on a day-to-day basis, staff pay very good attention to health and safety, as well as promoting healthy living. Teachers have very good knowledge of individuals' circumstances and needs, while those who are new to school are offered sensitive help to settle swiftly. In this safe, secure environment, pupils thrive. Pupils learn to be financially prudent by saving the money raised from selling toast to purchase benches for the playground. Teachers' careful analysis of pupils' work and helpful guidance in lessons, through marking and by the provision of targets, ensure that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, have a very clear idea of how to reach the challenging targets set for them. This supports their learning exceptionally well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school judges leadership and management to be good. However, the inspection team judges it to be outstanding because of the all-round excellent provision, which enables pupils to reach exceptionally high standards, both academically and personally. Staff and governors are far from complacent, using detailed analysis of test results and other monitoring to guide their decisions about future action. The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection. In her calm, well-organised and highly focused way, the headteacher has made certain that all those involved with the school have a shared vision and determination to provide the best for all pupils, therefore creating a very effective team.

Close working between teachers and governors to complete the school's self-evaluation form means that everyone has a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Performance management is thorough and identifies suitable training needs. Finances are tightly managed and very well directed to improving provision. Parents are extremely supportive of their children's education both financially and through their interest in their progress. Involvement in the local networked learning community is providing extra strength and resources towards the school's current focus on improving writing. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, if modest in some aspects. It is well substantiated with examples of tangible evidence to support its secure improvement and sustained high standards. With its outstanding leadership and management, the school has a very good capacity to continue improving its provision for pupils.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	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?	1	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	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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 your help during the inspection. We would like to tell you about our findings. We enjoyed being in your school, talking to you and watching you in lessons and around school. The list below shows all the things we like about your school.

- All of you work very hard, enjoy learning and make excellent progress.
- You like mathematics and art lessons.
- The teachers use the interactive whiteboards brilliantly and you see excellent photographs and maps to help you learn.
- The children in the nursery and reception classes love to play outside.
- Your headteacher and teachers work very hard and give you plenty of homework that is very well marked.
- You know what to do to make your work better and enjoy having your own target books to help you to improve your work.
- You know how important it is to eat healthily and to keep fit.
- The school council have made some very good suggestions to improve the playground for you.
- Your parents like your school very much and support you all very well by making sure you do your homework and learn your spellings.

We have not given your teachers any things to do to improve your school because we know you work very hard and do very well in all the tests you take each year. Please keep up the good work and continue to enjoy your excellent school.