



Our Lady Immaculate Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106489
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277574
Inspection dates 16 March 2006 to 16 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Gornall HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Downall Green Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Bryn
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wigan, Lancashire WN4 0LZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 727067
Number on roll	114	Fax number	01942 776614
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Reynolds
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Damian Winstanley

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The school completed a self-evaluation form which gave a view of its strengths and weaknesses. This document was the starting point for the inspection, which also looked at data about the school and information provided by it. The inspector met with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the chair of governors. Every class was visited and the work in several individual children's books was discussed with them. Lunchtime was observed as were morning playtime and some additional activities outside of lessons. The inspector read 39 questionnaires from parents which further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

This is a small school drawing pupils from the local parish of Our Lady Immaculate in Wigan. The school serves an area of mixed socio-economic background that crosses two local authorities. Numbers of children joining the school are small and their abilities, while average overall, span a wide range. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion with a statement for their learning difficulties is average. The school is part of a local Primary Learning Network, has participated in the Primary Leadership Programme and has a Healthy Schools award. Following a gradual decline in pupil numbers over recent years, the school was subject to closure proposals. The school has overcome this uncertainty and has benefited from a recent building and refurbishment programme.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Our Lady Immaculate is a good school. It has several strengths and only a few weaknesses. The standards reached by the Reception aged children when they enter Year 1 are similar to those typically found. Over the past three years standards at both key stages have improved. Good quality teaching helps most of the pupils make good progress. In 2005, the added educational value provided for pupils, as determined by the results of national tests, placed the school in the top five per cent of all schools nationally.

The headteacher provides good leadership. Since his arrival, just over two years ago, he has helped to raise standards, managed a school re-organisation programme and overseen significant improvements to the school's accommodation. The pupils are well cared for and kept safe. All staff are extremely conscientious and hardworking. This factor, coupled with the very positive attitudes and behaviour displayed by the pupils, makes this a happy and friendly school. The pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. The provision in the mixed Reception and Year 1 class is satisfactory overall but with some good features. Across the school, the provision for those pupils with learning difficulties is good.

The school gives good value for money because pupils feel secure, valued and well-supported. The issues for improvement from the school's previous inspection have been addressed. The school has a good capacity to ensure improvement continues.

Assessment is an underdeveloped aspect of the school's work. The school does not evaluate the pupils' progress as well as it might and, as a result, does not consistently set and share realistic targets for improvement with the pupils. The curriculum is satisfactory but requires broadening. The school knows this, and in order to improve further it should:

- monitor and evaluate the progress made by pupils more closely and use this information to set meaningful short-term targets to help them improve further;
- provide the pupils with a greater breadth of curriculum in order to further challenge young minds.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children join the school with varying skills but they are average overall. During their time in Reception, they make at least satisfactory progress. Approximately two-thirds of the children achieve the standard for five year olds before they join Year 1.

Standards at Key Stage 1 have improved over the last three years. The school's results in national tests in Year 2 rose significantly in 2004 and showed a further steady increase in 2005. The school is performing slightly above the national average. This represents at least satisfactory progress for these pupils and for some it is good progress.

The pupils' results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2005 were high and represented exceptional added value when compared to their performance four years previously at the end of Key Stage 1. Although the results are still provisional, the pupils achieved better than most primary schools in English, mathematics and science. The school exceeded its targets and the pupils made good progress. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is much improved because an enhanced programme is now taught and resources have been improved significantly.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress against the targets in their individual plans. Their problems are quickly identified and they receive well-directed support from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school, in its self-evaluation, graded the pupils' personal development as satisfactory but the inspector judges it to be good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils' first experiences of school in Reception are very positive and help them to settle quickly and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Through the school's ethos, captured in its message of 'Respect', pupils are given an effective foundation in matters of relationship, right and wrong and fairness. They behave exceptionally well throughout the day and show enthusiasm for most activities. The pupils clearly enjoy school. This is evident not only in their comments but in the quality of displays around school and in the work in their books. The pupils show high levels of cooperation in lessons, as in a Year 5 group work session on finding solutions to mathematical problems. Older pupils, who have specific responsibilities for caring for younger pupils and ensuring the school day runs smoothly, carry out their duties conscientiously. The pupils gain a good awareness of our multicultural society through subjects such as religious education and geography. The pupils fully support and contribute ideas to fundraising events and this helps them to develop valuable life skills. They have a good awareness of safety issues and a very good knowledge of healthy living. The pupils' attendance is satisfactory and similar to that in most primary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning varies slightly but it is never less than satisfactory and often very good; it is good overall. All lessons have good features that lead to most pupils making good progress. The teachers often make the lessons interesting and relevant to the pupils; older pupils commented that this was a key feature contributing to their enjoyment of school. Teachers promote pupils' speaking and listening skills very well. A very good English lesson in Year 6 developed the pupils' awareness of persuasive writing by encouraging them to discuss and express

their views about various texts. Teachers made good use of the recently introduced interactive whiteboards to enliven their teaching. A presentation on how plants grow captured the interest of the Reception children, especially when the plant began to wither because of lack of sunlight and water. Teachers have good subject knowledge. Assessment is used well to identify pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school supports their needs exceptionally well with effectively deployed classroom assistants and additional activities. The regular physical exercise sessions as part of the 'Cool' project, targeted at just a few pupils is very effective in improving both physical co-ordination skills and personal confidence.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Curriculum is generally matched to the needs of the pupils and meets statutory requirements. It is, however, rather narrow and requires broadening, for example, to incorporate new technologies and enhance the opportunities to develop the pupils' writing. The increase in the number of mixed age classes, as a result of falling pupil numbers, has brought additional complications regarding the planning of the curriculum. The school is meeting these challenges well through the effective sharing of good practice from other schools. In the Foundation Stage, the curriculum is satisfactory with some good features and is practically based to help children learn. The outdoor play area is of good quality and used effectively.

An effective programme of personal, social and health education successfully develops pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe and be a good citizen. It helps to create the respect pupils show towards everyone. The curriculum is enriched by visits, visitors and after school clubs. Sessions with qualified sports coaches help pupils stay fit. There are several displays that highlight the importance of healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The level of care is an outstanding feature of this school. This is a place where every pupil is valued and kept safe. The school sets all pupils a good example and helps them to live up to the expectations placed upon them. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and relationships are excellent. Child protection procedures are robust. Pupils who have social, emotional problems and/or learning difficulties are identified early and helped to overcome these in a sensitive way. Well-targeted support from teaching assistants is particularly effective.

Pupils trust the staff to keep them safe and help them. The pupils look out for one another on the playground and ensure no child feels lonely or threatened. The vast majority of the parents are highly supportive of the school. They know that their children are extremely well cared for. One remarked, 'teachers are excellent at the school and show the children care and attention'.

The area that prevents this aspect of the school from being outstanding overall is the academic guidance provided for the pupils. The pupils' progress is assessed satisfactorily

across the school but this information is not used as well as it might to identify and share targets for improvement with individual and groups of pupils. As a consequence, the pupils are not always clear about what they need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has high expectations of what can be achieved. By demonstrating his vision, through improved learning facilities and better resources, he has empowered staff, pupils, governors and parents. Although much has been achieved, the headteacher acknowledges the need to now focus more on the curriculum and pupils' progress. The school's self-evaluation is detailed and accurate. The school's improvement plan builds upon this work and its identified priorities are well-judged. Achievement and standards have risen but the headteacher is not complacent and realises there is still much potential for improvement in the school. Subject coordinators enjoy the challenge of leading their subject but agreed in discussions that the significant re-modelling of the school over the past year has deflected their attention a little. The co-ordinator for those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a very effective leader and manager.

The governing body supports the school fully. It has been very active in helping to secure the school's future, including raising funds to improve the accommodation. Attendance at governors' meetings is very good. The minutes of meetings are detailed and indicate that the governors are performing their role of critical friendship well. Parents' views are sought and they are supportive of the school. They agree that the school is a happy place, and that it is well led and managed.

The school has effectively tackled the issues from the last inspection. ICT provision is now much better; the pupils' presentation of their work has improved; teachers' marking is at least satisfactory and in some classes it is outstanding; and the range of extracurricular opportunities has been extended. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

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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	3	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?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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	2	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	NA
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

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed talking to you and was interested to see how you work in lessons and care for each other at break and lunchtime.

I agree with you and your parents that Our Lady Immaculate is a good school. Your teachers and teaching assistants work very hard to make sure that you enjoy your lessons and make good progress. Everyone in the school gets on well together and likes being there.

Your teachers help you to behave in a considerate and friendly way at all times. They care for you very much, and you also care for each other and make sure that nobody feels lonely or upset.

The school building is much better than it used to be thanks to the headteacher, governors, teachers and yourselves. You have new computers that you enjoy using and the classrooms have been improved a lot.

Your headteacher has good ideas about how to make Our Lady Immaculate still better: making sure that all of you have good information as to how to improve your own work and finding even more interesting topics for you to learn about.

Keep up the good work you are all doing at the school. I wish you every success in the future.