



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Leigh

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106501
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277576
Inspection dates 26 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Frank Carruthers CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Turner Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Leigh
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire WN7 2DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 606395
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01942 609499
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs A Blenkinship
Date of previous inspection	15 January 2001	Headteacher	Mrs Anne McNally

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Catholic primary school draws pupils from a wider area than its locality and from mixed social backgrounds. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The attainment of the children on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year between average and below average. The attainment of the current Reception class on entry was average. The school has gained the local authority's Early Years Quality Mark and is working towards the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for the pupils, whose personal development and academic achievement are good. Standards in Year 6 are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. The school's ethos supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. The quality of teaching and learning is good and systems to assess the pupils' progress are used exceptionally well to promote the pupils' learning. Lessons are planned well to cater for the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. However, teachers' questions in oral lessons do not always challenge the most able pupils and marking is not consistently geared to how pupils' work can improve. There is a rich curriculum and the provision in the Reception class is good. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and care, guidance and support for all pupils, are good.

Through the outstanding example set by the headteacher, supported well by the committed deputy headteacher, the staff have a shared vision of, and expectation for, the school. Leadership and management are good and the governing body carries out its role well. The school's self-evaluation procedures are excellent and its views of its performance match closely the judgements in this inspection report. The school has made significant improvement since the last inspection, especially in creating a very attractive school from one of its original buildings, improving provision and addressing issues from the last inspection. Its capacity to develop further is very good. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is below average and the school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus attention on teachers' questioning skills in lessons and their use of marking in order to challenge the pupils' learning and raise standards further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. Attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year between average and below average. Children make good progress and in the current year group, whose attainment on entry was average, the majority have reached the goals expected of them by the end of the year. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and standards are above average in the current Year 2. In recent years, standards have risen steadily in reading, writing and mathematics.

Progress continues to be good in current Key Stage 2 classes. However, this has not been the case in recent years, mainly because of variations in the quality of teaching, which the school acknowledged in its self-evaluation and has now rectified. Standards in Year 6 have been average in English and mathematics and well below average in science in recent years. Because of improvements to subject teaching and better tracking of pupils' progress, which is now good, they are now above average in English

and mathematics and average in science. The school is on target to exceed its challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and others from vulnerable backgrounds or learning English as an additional language make good progress thanks to the good provision. Pupils also achieve very well in the creative and performing arts.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The pupils really enjoy lessons and are secure and happy; this is shown in their good behaviour and attendance. When the behaviour of a small number of pupils becomes unsatisfactory, staff deal with it well. Exclusions are rare. Parents and pupils appreciate the substantial improvements that have made the school so attractive and vibrant. 'Our school is really lovely now', one pupil said. One excellent feature is the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collective worship promotes the school's caring ethos very well. Pupils learn about their own and other cultures in their lessons and this is seen in vibrant displays of work and the many opportunities pupils are given to take part in school and public performances. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in community activities and this also has a positive impact on their motivation and confidence. The school council is an effective strategy for expressing pupils' views. Pupils are encouraged to be fit and to drink water, and fruit is available at snack time. The school pays attention to the development of thinking skills and teamwork and, with its good provision in basic skills, these help to prepare the pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school viewed teaching and learning as being only satisfactory in recent times but that it was showing improvement during the current year. Inspectors agree with this analysis. Strengths of the teaching are the teachers' management of the pupils and their very good organisational skills. Teachers have good and, at times, outstanding expertise with computers and interactive whiteboards, using them very well to enhance pupils' learning. Where teaching is most effective, the pace of lessons is good and the staff plan activities that challenge well the various ability groups in classes. At times, however, teachers' questions in oral lessons do not always challenge the more able pupils. There remain the vestiges of underachievement in some older classes, which the school is doing well to overcome through good intervention strategies and support from teaching assistants. In recent years, the school has developed very good procedures to assess pupils' progress. Staff are using them exceptionally well to track all pupils' progress, set targets and put strategies in place to help underperforming pupils. Pupils' awareness of what they

need to do next in their work is improving, though marking of pupils' work is not consistently focused on this aspect of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is imaginatively planned to capture the pupils' interest and to broaden their understanding of the wider world. There is good provision for literacy and numeracy and a balance between knowledge and skills. Themed weeks and topics, often linked to the creative arts, bring subject areas together in vivid programmes of study. Visiting artists support creativity through ceramics and other media and have raised pupils' aspirations and confidence. Good use of information and communication technology and French in Key Stage 2 and a good range of after-school clubs, many with a sporting element, enrich the curriculum. The Foundation Stage curriculum is well planned and useful planning links are being made between the Reception year and Year 1 to ensure continuity. Good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they are taught the full curriculum. This is achieved through effective support in class and appropriately designed learning tasks. Extension activities provide challenge for the most able.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Staff know the pupils and their families well. The learning mentor has made a significant contribution to the development of relationships with parents and pupils, promoting good attendance and behaviour and increasing the pupils' say in whole-school decision making. Procedures and practices for all aspects of child protection and health and safety are robust. Improvements to the premises have significantly enhanced the learning environment and safety. Arrangements for children starting in the Reception class are good and a strong relationship is forged with parents. As a result, children settle quickly into school routines. Pupils with extra needs or vulnerable pupils are well supported. One parent commented, 'We are fully supported through school. I now see light at the end of the tunnel.' The headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced very good procedures that monitor and track pupils' achievements and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. An effective leadership team has been created under the outstanding leadership of the dynamic and energetic headteacher. The school's ethos is extremely caring and supportive of all its members and reflects well the school's Catholic character. The inclusion of pupils with additional needs into the school community is managed well. There is a clear vision for school improvement based on a highly rigorous analysis of the school's ongoing work and the pupils' needs. Robust and effective monitoring systems are in place and the school

has the capacity to support continued improvement. Subject leaders are beginning to make an effective contribution to the school's drive to raise standards.

The governing body gives dedicated support to the school and is closely involved with all aspects of school life. Governors, many of them long serving, have good awareness of issues around progress and attainment and challenge the senior leadership team well. They know how the school should plan to move on to the next stage in its programme for improvement. Radical action to improve the school environment has resulted in the creation of modernised school premises that provide a positive climate for learning. The funds available to the school have been managed well to achieve this. This year's carry forward sum, once building costs have been paid, is broadly average. Communications between school and home are very good, with regular informative newsletters and surveys of parents' views so that they have a voice in school development.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	1	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?	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	1	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

Thank you very much for your help when we inspected your school. Please pass on our thanks to the other children we met and spoke to while we were at school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

There are many things in your school that you can feel very proud of, for instance:

- we were very impressed with how lovely your new school building is and how well you're looking after it
- staff take good care of you all and teach you well
- your attitude to your school work is good and it is clear that you really enjoy school
- we were impressed with how well you are doing in music, singing, art and sports
- staff provide you with great opportunities to enjoy activities after school and to go on trips.

To make the school even better, we want the staff to make sure they ask you challenging questions in lessons. We want them to help you to learn even better by sharing with you how you can make improvements to your work.