



Immaculate Conception Catholic Primary

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112899
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 279051
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Andrew Cook LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	College Road
School category	Voluntary aided		S21 3YB
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246 432916
Number on roll	215	Fax number	01246 433085
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev.Peter Maguire
Date of previous inspection	26 June 2000	Headteacher	Mr. Stephen Owen

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	Inspection number 279051
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a moderately-sized Roman Catholic school, attended by children who come from two parishes that cover a wide geographical area of north-east Derbyshire. Almost all of the children are of White British background and a very few children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is just below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a caring school. Children enjoy school and their behaviour is good. The leadership and management of the school are good. However, inspectors judge the overall effectiveness of the school to be satisfactory because the progress children make, especially in writing, has been uneven over the last few years. The school judged its effectiveness as good because it did not appreciate fully the impact of the dip in writing standards on making this judgement. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Children in the Reception class really enjoy learning and make good progress because of good teaching. Throughout the rest of the school the rate of progress made by children varies. Year 6 test results in 2005 show that standards were above average in science, average in mathematics but below average in writing. Improvements have been made to the way children are taught to develop as writers, although it is still early days and too soon to assess the impact of this. Other teaching is satisfactory overall, with more good teaching taking place in some year groups than others. When teachers mark children's work they do not always pick up on common errors made and so teaching does not always compensate for small gaps in learning. Provision for children's welfare is good and results in good personal development. The school council is very active and is rightly proud of what it has done to improve the school. Governors of the school provide sound support. The school has made good progress since the last inspection which proves there is good capacity to improve further and deal with the standards in writing. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop effective teaching strategies for improving standards in writing.
- Ensure teaching is consistently good across the school. - Develop marking, so that it identifies gaps in children's learning in order that further teaching can address these.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. Children start school with broadly average abilities. In the Reception class they make good progress to reach above average standards. However, progress slows down so that, by the end of Year 2, standards fall to closer to the national average level. The results of the national tests show that the standards reached by children at the end of Year 6 have been inconsistent over the last few years. In science, standards have remained above average, showing that children have made good progress. In mathematics, standards have been above average overall, but dipped in the 2005 tests. However, in English, standards have fallen for the last two years and in the 2005 tests were just below average. This dip was specifically the result of a lack of progress made by children in their writing. The school has responded well to this and set challenging targets for improving standards in writing. There is now evidence in children's books and in lessons seen that they are

now making at least satisfactory progress. Through effective support, children with learning difficulties make overall good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, reflecting the school's strong Catholic ethos. Children's good contributions to the assembly reinforced their moral and social development, and the passion in their singing made this a spiritually uplifting occasion. Behaviour is good. Children are polite and helpful and get along well with each other and with adults. They are positive about school and enjoy their lessons. Good training for older children as playground buddies is very effective in resolving playground problems and in reducing incidents. The school council organises itself well and contributes much to the life of the school. The good use they make of their own budget to fund the improvements they identify is particularly commendable. Through a very good personal, social and health education programme (PSHE), children understand about keeping safe, the importance of good health and the problems caused by the misuse of drugs and other substances. Children say they feel safe and know where to go for advice if they need help. Children regularly take part in vigorous physical exercise, and the good variety of break-time activities contributes well to this. Through sensitively planned topics and their charitable work, children have a good awareness of the local culture and that of the wider world. By the end of Year 6, children have many skills that will equip them well for the future. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Children's good behaviour and attitudes, along with the very positive relationships they have with staff, help them to learn. Teaching and learning in English is improving because the school has introduced a range of positive teaching strategies focused on helping children to become better writers. In the Reception class, teaching is good. Learning is made fun and children respond with enjoyment and learn quickly. In an outstanding lesson there was a buzz of purposeful activity. The children were excited when talking about what they had done. One group used a digital camera to record their work, which was then shown to the rest of the class on an interactive whiteboard. Elsewhere in the school teaching varies. In some classes there is more satisfactory teaching than good. In satisfactory lessons children are given work that does not always help them to make fast enough progress. However, in good lessons, as seen in Year 6, there is a brisk pace to learning, children clearly know what is expected of them and work well. Effective use is made of 'talking partners' in many lessons enabling children to share their understanding of what they have learnt. Teaching assistants are generally used well, especially to support those children with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broad and balanced curriculum meets all of the requirements, and a stimulating curriculum in the Foundation Stage links areas of learning together well. Provision for developing children's personal and social skills and their contribution to the life of the school is very good. Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities are well provided for. Effective use is made of classroom computers to support work in many lessons. Teachers and children also make good use of interactive whiteboards to bring lessons to life. While the after-school provision is limited by the transport needs of the children, there are still many opportunities for enriching the curriculum during the day. Good links with the local secondary schools, for example, support the teaching of foreign languages, and the provision for music throughout the school is good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school has good arrangements to promote children's personal development and ensure that they are safe and well protected. Regular PSHE lessons and discussions (circle times) about personal safety, keeping healthy, friends and family responsibilities, all help towards children's well being and their good social and moral development. These are well supported by other initiatives such as healthy eating, ready access to water and the many opportunities for regular physical exercise. Good support is given to those children who need extra help through their individual education plans and personal targets so that they make good progress. Children have targets for the areas in which they need to improve most, and older children understand what they have already achieved. But, while these targets are appropriate and give children a good idea of what they need to do to move on, marking does not always address the frequent, common errors that crop up in children's work and can provide a barrier to progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership team has recognised the recent dip in standards in writing; it is doing something about it and is determined that things will improve. Based on the good progress the school has made since the last inspection there is strong evidence that the leadership team has the capacity to make this happen. The headteacher knows the school well, cares about the school community and is held in high regard. He leads and manages the school effectively and persistently strives for its success. The other two members of staff in the leadership team support him well and use complementary strengths and skills. Together they have created a sense of purpose in the school which reflects its distinctly Catholic character. The school takes good notice of what parents and children think and acts on areas of concern. The leadership team effectively makes regular checks on children's progress and the quality of teaching. They know what needs to be improved further and have secure

plans for action. Governors provide satisfactory support and challenge. They are excited about the plans for a new school building but also realise there is work to be done to further raise standards in writing.

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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	3	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?	3	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	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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

I am writing to say a big thank you for making our visit to your school so enjoyable. You showed us that you are thoughtful children who look after each other and work hard. We thought your behaviour was good and we also thought you were all very polite. When we were in your assembly your singing was beautiful and made us feel that it was a very special time. We were very impressed with your school council. They have done lots of things to make your school a better place, including getting the governors of your school to agree that girls can wear trousers! We were also very impressed with your headteacher, Mr Owen. He organises things well and he is very good at making people smile. As we went through all of our checks we found some things that we thought your school could improve on. Here are the main things that we found.

- We know you are working really hard to improve your writing. We think you should keep going because you are getting better.
- Some of your lessons are good and we think that all of them should be so that everyone really enjoys what they are learning and does as well as they can.
- When teachers mark your work we think they should make sure that they always spot things you keep getting wrong. They can then give you work to help you to improve.

When we spoke with the governors they told us about some exciting plans for a new school building. We think you deserve the best building that can be built and we hope that when it is finished it is very special.