



St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119511
LEA Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 280577
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Feilden Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackburn
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire, BB2 1LQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 580462
Number on roll	250	Fax number	01254 690389
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C Pope
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized Roman Catholic primary school is situated in the town centre of Blackburn and is surrounded not by houses but by local businesses. There are an average number of children with learning difficulties. Most pupils come from an area near the school with a significant degree of social and economic disadvantage, but a small number come from a more affluent area outside the normal catchment; an above average proportion of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. There are a very small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, but none at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Currently, there are three looked after children. The local authority has a high regard for the school and the school has received two national achievement awards in recent years. At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

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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 and the inspectors share the view that this is a good school and provides good value for money. By the time pupils leave, they have made good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics, and science, and above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT). In 2004, the Year 6 results in mathematics and science were outstanding. Personal development is of a high quality, and pupils say they enjoy the wide range of responsibilities they are given. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Teaching is good. An effective assessment system is in place, but the information gathered is not always used to best effect in Years 1 and 2. Good procedures ensure the health, safety and well-being of pupils. Leadership and management are good; subject leaders make an important contribution to ensuring that all subjects are taught well. The acting headteacher has ensured that the strong, cohesive team of committed, hardworking staff continue to work together well. The school governors do an outstanding job and carry out their roles superbly. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils make good progress from their well below average standards on entry. The school has the capacity to improve even further.

Parents share the school's and inspectors' view that this is a good school. One parent's comments epitomises parental views. 'My children get up every morning wanting to go to school and when I collect them in the evening they always have a smile on their faces. Each of them is treated as an individual and is recognised for their own personal qualities.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to set challenging targets in order to improve boys' reading and writing skills.
- Improve library provision to enable pupils to have access to a well-stocked, well-organised and suitably located library.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Given the very low attainment of children when they start school in the nursery, they make good progress and achieve very well to surpass expected standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. In 2004, standards were outstanding in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve very well in ICT and attain well above average standards. When children enter the nursery their learning is well below average, especially in language, social and mathematical skills. They make good progress during the Foundation Stage but, on entry to Year 1, most have still not reached the learning goals expected for their age group.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make steady progress as a result of good teaching but much more needs to be done to ensure that boys perform even better in developing their

reading and writing skills. Pupils with additional learning needs and those with English as an additional language achieve as well as other learners. The school has very quickly put in place suitable measures to support looked after children, thereby ensuring their learning is not disrupted.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being of all children are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and a credit to their school. They enjoy their lessons, are keen to succeed and work hard. Behaviour is good and neither children nor parents expressed concern about bullying. Attendance has improved to be around average with the introduction of a successful reward system, and the popular breakfast club encourages children to be punctual.

A strong Christian ethos pervades the school, promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. A discussion with the school council members demonstrates that the school successfully teaches children about democracy and introduces them to the responsibilities of living in a community. One pupil commented, 'you should play nicely, be gentle, kind and helpful'. Thought-provoking assemblies encourage children to consider and appreciate the less tangible spiritual aspects of life. They learn about the diverse range of cultures in society and as a result they respect beliefs and views that are different from their own. Pupils are well aware of the benefits of healthy eating and thoroughly enjoy the varied opportunities for physical education and competitive sport. All of these features prepare pupils very well for the next stage of their education and for life in the wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching. Teaching gives pupils a strong start from the beginning of their schooling, and meets the needs of all groups of children, many of whom enter the school with very low levels of reading and writing. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are well planned, interesting and challenging, sustaining the pupils' interest and motivation. Teachers know their pupils well. However, although they know the levels children are at, insufficient use is made of assessment information in Years 1 and 2 to set challenging targets that can help boys to move on in developing their reading and writing skills. Assessment is good in the nursery and reception classes and used very well to identify those children who need extra help or challenge.

Classroom assistants are very well deployed, helping pupils – particularly those with learning difficulties – learn more effectively through small group work. Very good use of ICT helps pupils use and develop their skills and, as a result, standards are very high. Pupils' behaviour is skilfully managed and lessons proceed according to plan. Good

improvements have been made in planning since the previous inspection. Good examples of marking help pupils improve, but the quality of marking is not consistent, so that some children only know in a general way what they have to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the curriculum is of a good quality and meets the needs of learners well. This is a school that takes every opportunity to make the curriculum interesting and exciting. Teachers' expertise, both from within the school and through the use of outside specialists, is used effectively to provide specialist teaching in important areas such as art, music, dance and physical education. An exciting range of activities and outstanding opportunities help children in the nursery and reception classes to develop personal skills.

Opportunities for pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are outstanding, with a very wide range of sporting and cultural activities available both in and after school. Many organised visits and outings contribute to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. For example, a visit made to the local football club prompted a high level of interest from boys and girls alike. ICT provision is outstanding, resulting in pupils' well above average standards in this subject.

Provision for personal and health education has been improved since the previous inspection. A programme of personal, health and social education, including sex education and the effects of drugs, smoking and alcohol is well planned to equip learners with the awareness needed to cope with changes and dangers in their lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The way the school caters and cares for its pupils makes a good contribution to their good progress and their enjoyment of school. Child protection procedures are good. Teachers and other adults are alert to signs of distress or anxiety in pupils. The work of classroom assistants is of high quality and the good relationships that exist between teachers and other adults help pupils to feel secure and settled. Good personal support is given to pupils, especially to those with additional learning needs and the looked after children. The school responds very effectively to any crisis in the pupils' lives, bringing in outside agencies where necessary. Pupils work in a safe environment with teachers and other adults taking every care to ensure their safety. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place and are of a good quality.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The acting headteacher, with the support of an outstanding governing body and dedicated staff, is successful because of her high expectations, openness in discussions and willingness to listen. The acting deputy headteacher and subject coordinators are a team of committed and hardworking colleagues with a common purpose to provide children with the best opportunities possible. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good and firmly focused on constant improvement.

The school has good systems in place to evaluate itself and provides an accurate reflection of most of the school's strengths and weaknesses, matched closely to the outcomes of the inspection. However, the differences between the performance of girls and boys in Years 1 and 2 have not been picked up. Management systems and procedures are consistent across the school. Leadership is effective in all subject areas with staff playing a major part in helping to decide the priorities for further school development. Both parents and children are pleased with the way the school is led. Professional development courses have equipped teachers and support staff well with the skills they need, this is especially apparent in ICT. The involvement of subject specialists from outside the school in subjects such as dance has been highly successful in ensuring all pupils receive an education that fully takes into account their needs. Most resources are well used, but the library is in a remote position, and not well stocked.

The school fully meets its stated aim to 'work to build the spirit of confidence and mutual respect amongst the St Anne's community'.

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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	3	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	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?	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	3	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	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

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5 October 2005

Dear Pupils,

Thank you for helping during the inspection. We would like to tell you about our findings. You will not be surprised to know that we found your school to be good in almost everything it does. We enjoyed being in your school, talking to you, your acting headteacher and adults who work with you. The list below shows some of the things we liked about your school.

You work hard and do very well in the yearly tests by the end of the juniors.

You are better at using computers than most other primary school pupils in the country.

You like your teachers and visiting teachers, especially the way they make learning fun.

You are well behaved and get on well with each other.

It is very pleasing to see you can choose healthy meals at lunchtimes.

The people who are in charge of your school (school governors) are excellent and really make sure that your school continues to do well.

All the adults in school work very hard to care for you.

You enjoy the visits you make to different places, learning to speak French, learning to play musical instruments and the sports and clubs after school.

We have asked your teachers to look at two things to make your work even better.

The work that children, especially boys, do in English lessons in Years 1 and 2 could be made a bit harder.

The school library is not in the best place and there are not enough good quality non-fiction books to help you find out new things.

I really enjoyed visiting your school and meeting members of the school's council.

Yours Sincerely,

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector

Annex B