



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119579
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280600
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lightfoot Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Fulwood
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 862305
Number on roll	201	Fax number	01772 862305
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Patrick McMahon
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs E M McGrath

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors over a period of two days.

Description of the school

This is a medium sized Catholic primary school in a fairly prosperous suburb of Preston. There is little unemployment in the catchment area. There are 201 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils attend nursery or playgroup prior to entry and their attainment on entry is usually average or slightly above. Twenty-two pupils come from a minority ethnic background. There are 15 pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 14 identified as gifted or talented.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Its own evaluation is that it is a satisfactory school and this reflects its extremely high expectations of itself. Pupils are very happy and hard working. They thrive here, and leave as well rounded individuals with higher than average results in national tests. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Good leadership and carefully managed finances have resulted in rapid improvement since the last inspection and ensure that the school is in a good position to carry on improving. It is giving outstanding value for money.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into school routines and make good progress. The majority exceed the early learning goals by the end of their Reception year. That good progress continues throughout the school.

The school's main strength is that it recognises that academic success is worthless unless pupils also develop as happy and fulfilled individuals. Good teaching is looking after the former and outstanding attention to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is contributing to the latter. However, pupils' attainment in mathematics falls short of that in English and science, and the marking of pupils' work does not always show them clearly what they need to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school underestimates how well pupils achieve. It judges that their progress is satisfactory. Inspection shows it to be good overall and in some instances outstanding. Last year in English, for instance, all but two Year 6 pupils met national expectations and well over a half exceeded them. Progress is slower in mathematics but even here standards are higher than is usually the case and most pupils are meeting national expectations. The difference between English and mathematics is that many fewer pupils are exceeding the national average in mathematics.

Exceptionally high expectations are reflected in the setting of very demanding targets, which were very nearly met in English and mathematics last year and exceeded in science. A drive to improve standards in science has been particularly effective. The school identified weakness in investigative work and remedied the situation. Last year, the proportion of pupils who exceeded the nationally expected level rose from just over half to nearly three quarters compared with the year before. A concerted drive is now under way to improve attainment in mathematics.

No group of pupils is making significantly different progress to any other. The good start made by pupils in the Foundation Stage is successfully built on in Years 1 and 2. Close attention, and extra support, is paid to pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and this is helping most of them to reach the national average for all pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is an area where the school meets with outstanding success. The school contributes strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school and life in general. Every pupil that inspectors spoke to made it very clear how much they love coming to school. Parents agree, and this is clearly reflected in pupil's exceptionally good attendance.

There is a wonderful atmosphere around the school. It is far from quiet but the noise is from excited, hard working pupils, who are eager to share their views. Pupils are strongly encouraged to reflect on their lives and those of others. They develop a fine sense of giving as well as taking. Their contribution to the community is extensive and they have a strong sense of responsibility for helping others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils develop an acute awareness of different cultures and of the importance of getting on well with others, whatever their race or religion.

Incidents of misbehaviour are rare because pupils are ingrained with strong moral and social values. 'Partner Time', where Year 6 pupils help Reception children with activities, sometimes read to them and occasionally take them to church demonstrates pupils' growing maturity and sense of responsibility. Exercise and healthy living are promoted well and pupils show great awareness of the importance of staying safe and making sure that others are not endangered through their own actions. Their self-confidence and politeness bodes well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good for pupils of all ages. This is a view shared by pupils and parents. None of the teaching inspectors saw was less than good and some of it was outstanding. For example, a Year 4 mathematics lesson in which a wide range of varied activities, carefully matched to individual's ability, helped pupils gain a fuller understanding of fractions. The use of computers by pupils and teachers is outstanding and fully justifies the school's investment in technology. All lessons are carefully planned and prepared, with a clear statement of what pupils are expected to learn. The work is interesting and pupils frequently show excitement when they realise they have improved their performance or learned something new. The work of classroom assistants is skilfully directed and they offer good support, often to pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The main thing stopping teaching from being outstanding is that assessment is not always effectively used to promote even better

learning. Procedures are good, and individual pupil progress is carefully checked but marking is not yet consistent in all classes and at times it is not used well enough to help pupils to understand how they can improve their work. The school has already identified this as a priority for improvement and is dealing with it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a good curriculum. This is a clear factor in explaining why attendance is so good. When questioned about their favourite subjects, many pupils struggled to find any that were not their favourite. Good emphasis is placed on teaching the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology but these are not allowed to dominate the curriculum at the expense of other subjects. Links between subjects are being successfully developed to make good use of time and to help pupils to understand that different subjects often have a lot in common. Many subjects contribute greatly to improving pupils' reading and writing skills and give them many opportunities to practise their computer skills. Numeracy skills are promoted in subjects such as science but closer investigation into how this could be extended to all subjects might help raise standards in mathematics.

The range of enrichment activities is very good. Many opportunities are created for pupils to participate in sporting activities. Lunchtime and after-school clubs are very well attended. Specialist music teaching allows many pupils to learn how to play musical instruments. Pupils enjoy their visits to places of interest, nearly all of which are clearly linked to topic work or their cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Exceptional attention is paid to ensuring that pupils are well cared for in a safe environment. Child protection procedures are thorough and carefully observed; possible risks are thoroughly assessed and there is a keen awareness of health and safety. Pupils are aware of the importance of behaving sensibly to avoid accidents but these happen, albeit rarely and there are a few cuts and scrapes in the playground. This is not due to lack of supervision.

Teachers are quick to spot pupils who are experiencing difficulty in understanding things or who are not learning as fast as they could. They offer these pupils extensive support and set clear targets for improvement. Parents' concerns are listened to carefully and the views of pupils are frequently influential, for instance in choosing equipment for the playground or choosing charities they would like to support. The school has excellent procedures for welcoming new pupils and for helping to ensure a smooth transfer to secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are as good as the school claims. In some respects they are better. For instance, excellent attention is paid to ensuring that all learners share the same opportunity to do as well as they can, largely through the very careful allocation of staffing and resources. The school runs very smoothly, helped in no small way by highly efficient administration and a strong, shared sense of purpose and ambition to give pupils the best possible deal. The headteacher is hugely influential, not only in the school but amongst other heads in the area. There has been extensive, well-directed exploration and analysis of attainment in mathematics but the results of initiatives to improve it have yet to be seen. The modesty of judgement the school makes about itself demonstrates lofty ambition rather than flawed self-evaluation. Monitoring and evaluation of standards is thorough. That of teaching is well focused.

Finance is carefully managed. The surplus funds identified by the previous inspection have been wisely spent, much of it to improve accommodation, resources and playgrounds. Governance is good. It is more supportive than challenging, but there is extensive involvement of governors in many of the school's activities and they show a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As governors say, 'This is a school to be proud of'.

The school roll has fallen this year and this trend is predicted to continue as the birth rate in the area falls. This will put pressure on the budget but the school is otherwise well placed to continue building on the many, good improvements since the previous inspection.

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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	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?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	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	1	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?	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?	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	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	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

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17 November 2005

Dear Pupils

It was a real treat for us to visit your school the other day. We came to see how you were getting on and if there was anything we could suggest to make your school even better. You made us very welcome and helped us a lot with your sensible and thoughtful comments about the school.

We couldn't see or talk to all of you but a lot of your parents wrote to us to say how good the school was and how much you enjoyed attending. Looking at you in class and in the playground it's clear that they are right. There are lots of good things about your school. Here are a few.

It's a happy school; you work hard and do well in tests, especially English.

Your teachers are good, they make you work hard; a few of you think you could work a bit harder – so what's stopping you?

We think you are growing up to be kind and considerate; your parents should be proud of you.

You are extremely well looked after by staff.

There is one main thing that we felt would make the school even better. You may not notice it but staff are worried that you don't do as well in mathematics as in English. It's true and we're asking them to keep looking for ways to help you. You can help them by trying extra hard in lessons.

Good luck anyway and thanks again for making us feel so welcome

All the best.

Yours faithfully
Alastair Younger
Lead inspector

Annex B