



St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119592
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280606
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Windrows
School category	Voluntary aided		New Church Farm
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Skelmersdale, Lancashire WN8 8NP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01695 724798
Number on roll	135	Fax number	01695 724798
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Frances Hopkins
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr David Ashley

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving a part of Skelmersdale with high levels of social deprivation. A large proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is below average and the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is above average. The pupils are of mainly White British origin with a very small proportion with mixed White and Black African and Black British backgrounds. A small number of Traveller children are on roll.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that this is a good school, with some outstanding features, giving good value for money. Attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below expectations. Progress throughout the school is good so that by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. However, the speaking and listening skills of many lower ability pupils are less well developed. Personal development is excellent. Pupils behave well and know about leading healthy lifestyles. They enjoy coming to school and are involved in decision making and contribute well to the community. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. They make work interesting for pupils of all abilities. The curriculum is good overall with excellent enrichment activities. However, planning for subjects other than English and mathematics does not clearly promote the development of skills. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good so that children make a good start. Care and guidance are good with pastoral care being exemplary. The school makes good use of assessment to track progress but does not provide pupils with individual targets to help them to improve their work. Leadership and management are good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher has led to the creation of a caring school where all children feel included and achieve well. This leadership, and the shared commitment of staff and governors to raising standards, give the school good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve skills in speaking and listening in order to raise standards in English, particularly for less able pupils.
- Improve planning to promote the development of skills in subjects other than English and mathematics.
- Provide pupils with individual targets for improvement so that they know clearly what they need to do in order to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress as they move from below expected standards on entry and reach above average standards at the end of Year 6. In the 2005 tests at the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing were significantly below average and in mathematics they were below average. This was because a high proportion of pupils in this group had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently, Key Stage 1 pupils are making good progress and they are in line to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, maintaining the overall improving trends. In the 2005 tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were above average and the school exceeded its statutory targets. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are continuing to make good progress and are achieving well. Again the trend is upwards. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and most achieve the goals expected of them.

Many children come in to school with limited skills in speaking and listening. The school provides many opportunities for them to develop these skills and during their time in school most pupils improve. However, the progress of lower ability pupils is slower.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding. Attendance, being in line with the national average, is satisfactory.

In the Foundation Stage the staff quickly recognise individual personal needs and ensure that the children are well supported to help them settle into daily routines. All pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their consistently good behaviour in lessons and enthusiasm for learning. Staff work hard to create a very calm and safe environment where pupils achieve well. In and around school they show high self-esteem and confidence. They know about, and understand, issues related to bullying and racism. Pupils know who to talk to if they are unhappy and all agree that they believe their school to be a very safe place. Pupils are fully involved in the life of the school and in decision making and, therefore, respect the school rules and property.

Pupils know that staff listen to them and act on their suggestions, for example, introducing new equipment at playtimes. Some pupils have been appointed as 'playground friends' and are rightly proud of their role in helping other children at playtime. Pupils make a very positive contribution to the school and local community through specific projects and work for charities. For example, Year 6 regularly participates in paired reading sessions with Reception children. The high participation rate in the 'lunchtime walking club' is an example of children acting on what they have learnt about keeping healthy. The school's involvement with 'Skelmersdale's Food Initiative Group' is helping children to choose to eat snacks that are good for them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The strong staff are fully committed to meeting children's different needs enabling them to achieve well. Information from good assessment systems is used carefully to plan the next steps in learning. Despite the good steps already taken to improve children's spoken English, the limited use of descriptive language by less able pupils is hindering their progress. Lessons are lively and interesting giving children opportunities to learn in different ways. The strong emphasis on making learning enjoyable ensures children are eager to learn, behave well and work hard. Teachers' marking accurately identifies areas for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because

staff are particularly skilled in recognising problems and then planning a programme to help pupils improve.

Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. An effective range of well planned practical activities cover all areas of learning, with an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's social and communication skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including provision in the Foundation Stage, is good. It is broad and balanced and well focused on pupils' needs. There is clear emphasis on the development of skills in English and mathematics and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn about healthy lifestyles. The school is extending its use of English, mathematics and information and communication technology

(ICT) in the other subjects of the curriculum. Planning is generally good although the planning of skills in subjects such as history and geography is not clearly delineated. The curriculum is enhanced by very close links with the local secondary school and an excellent range of enrichment activities. Pupils extend their learning by visits out of school and by a wide range of visitors to school, such as a story teller from the Traveller Community and a willow weaver. Spanish is taught and most pupils take advantage of the extensive range of out of school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The school rightly judges its pastoral care to be outstanding. It provides an outstanding level of inclusion, care and support for all its pupils, including those from traveller families and for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Procedures for child protection and risk assessments are very secure. Very good links with specialist staff and outside agencies ensure pupils' specific needs are met very well. For example, the learning mentor has been very influential in improving attendance and raising the achievement of the most vulnerable children. Parents feel confident about approaching the school, and are very happy with the care given to their children. Excellent relationships contribute very effectively to pupils' well being and progress. Pupils feel safe and happy in school, and know they can trust staff to help with any problems, saying, 'You can say anything and you know it will be taken seriously'. The way the progress of all groups of pupils is tracked and monitored is good. However, at present the school does not have an agreed system for helping pupils to determine exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The vision and dedication of the headteacher are exemplary. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher and staff in creating a shared ethos where the drive to improve standards goes hand in hand with the provision of an extremely caring and inclusive community. This is underpinned by the Christian values of the school and epitomised by the words of the school motto, 'Consideration, Care and Courtesy'. The quality of leadership and management is well reflected in pupils' achievement and in their personal development. Staff work well as a team to provide a rich curriculum and set challenging targets. Subject leaders have a good knowledge of standards in their subjects and there are plans to extend this further when they begin to check teaching and learning in order to make improvements and further raise standards. School self-evaluation gives a realistic appraisal of where the school is now and is closely linked with its development plan. The school is well supported by governors and is highly regarded in the local community. Most parents have positive views of the school and are provided with many opportunities to support children's learning. The views of parents and those of pupils are acted upon and there is a strong family spirit within the school. Very strong leadership has enabled the school to make good improvements since the last inspection and it has good capacity to improve further.

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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	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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	1	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	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	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

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St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

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25 May 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. You told us that your school is a safe and friendly place and that your headteacher, in particular, is a very special person. The inspectors agree. We were delighted to learn that so many of you enjoy coming to school and feel that your ideas are listened to. During our visit we were particularly interested to see how well you behaved and were delighted to find that your behaviour was always good both in and out of lessons.

These are some of the things that your school does well:

the excellent way your headteacher leads the school makes sure that all adults who work in the school and the children in it know they are important

you are helped to make good progress in all your learning

children who find learning difficult are very well supported and this helps them to do very well

everyone at your school is made welcome and you make friends easily

your teachers make learning interesting for you in lessons and encourage you to join different clubs

you have learnt a lot about eating healthy foods; staying safe in and out of school; and, why it is important that no one feels unhappy at your school.

The things we have asked your teachers to do to help your school be even better is to:

continue to help you improve your spoken English;

use targets to give you even more information about how well you are doing;

identify the new skills you need to learn in subjects like history and geography as you move from class to class.

Your headteacher and teachers are already working on these but we want them to continue with this so that you will make even more progress in your learning. Finally, we were very impressed by the amount of exercise you take and how many of you joined the walking club. Well done, keep on walking!

Yours sincerely

David Earley

(Your school inspector)