



St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119607
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280609
Inspection dates 22 June 2006 to 23 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Austin's Place
School category	Voluntary aided		Preston
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, PR1 3YJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 253851
Number on roll	200	Fax number	01772 821035
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Dermott Gethings
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Augustine's is a Catholic primary school of average size in an economically deprived regeneration area of Preston. An above average proportion of its pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost 70% of pupils are of Asian British heritage, mainly Indian and with groups of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritage. There is also a small number of Black British and mixed heritage children. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although the number with statements of special educational need is above average. Children's attainment when they start school is well below the level that is typical for their age. The school has the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Investors in People status, and is a member of the local schools' Excellence Cluster.

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 with some outstanding features. Its overall effectiveness is better than the school's own cautious judgement. It has maintained its strengths since the last inspection, and has good capacity to continue to improve. Many children have skills that are well below average for their age when they join the Reception class, especially in English, but achieve well by the time they leave the school. Quality and standards in Reception are good. In last year's national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were above average in mathematics and science, and average in English. This is because teaching and learning are good, ranging from satisfactory to outstanding. On average over the last three years the school's results have been in the top 20% nationally compared to similar schools. Progress is good overall, although it also varies in lessons from satisfactory to outstanding. The school is successful in helping pupils from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds to do well. However, the school does not assess the precise understanding and use of the language of a small number of pupils at an early stage of learning English in order to meet their specific needs.

A real strength of the school is the way it unites almost all its children and families into a dynamic learning community, in line with its mission statement. The staff and governors' commitment to ensuring all children thrive here, no matter what their background, leads to outstanding equality of opportunity, personal development and well-being. Many parents of Muslim children say that they chose this Catholic school because of its strong moral and social focus. One parent wrote, 'There is a special learning atmosphere here with excellent links to the local community.' Inspection evidence of excellent partnerships across faith groups, with other schools and colleges, and with the local authority, confirms this view. Leadership and management are also good. The headteacher is well supported by other key staff who share her high expectations for pupils' achievement and well-being. The whole staff ensure that pupils are safe and well cared for, and that those with particular needs are given good support and guidance. Staff and governors monitor and evaluate the school's work thoroughly, using the findings effectively to plan and implement improvements. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of lessons where teaching is satisfactory to reduce variability from year to year in pupils' progress.
- Target learning resources more precisely to meet the specific needs of those few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well, making good progress from entry to leaving the school in Year 6. Standards have risen to average levels in reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2,

although fewer pupils than average achieve higher levels. This is a major developmental focus for the school that has yielded success in 2005 and 2006 tests. Year 6 standards have risen from a low point in 2003 to be above average in 2005, a real boost for the school, raising it into the top 12% nationally compared to similar schools. Standards in science have been in the top 10% for three years on this comparison. Challenging targets have been met, and the current Year 6 is on track to meet demanding targets this year. By the end of 2005, boys, pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made significantly above average progress from Year 2 to Year 6. The school has a deserved high reputation amongst parents for its success in helping pupils from minority ethnic groups to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, supporting their academic progress well. This school actively celebrates its diverse population so that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Acts of worship are truly shared occasions, with pupils of different faiths leading prayers in their chosen language. Pupils reflect extremely well on important issues because such reflection is a regular feature of school life. A Year 6 display stated, 'Wanted: a compassionate classmate who is kind and considerate.' Many pupils like this can be found here. Relationships between all members of the school are very good. Pupils really enjoy their lessons and their behaviour is at least good at all times. They have a very good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy, understanding very well the dangers of drugs and alcohol through visits from the 'health bus'. Pupils help to raise considerable funds for charity and accept responsibility to keep the locality tidy. The 'world of work' week organised by the staff is a good example of the imaginative activities that combine with pupils' good basic skills to prepare them very well for the future. The school has agreed with the local authority an achievable attendance figure. Although below the national average, the target takes into consideration the school's particular circumstances. The school is nevertheless determined to raise attendance to average levels if possible.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, though they vary in lessons from satisfactory to outstanding. Almost all parents agree, with one who said, 'All children are helped to achieve their full potential.' The staff certainly strive for this, and set ambitious targets for their own teaching and support for pupils. They plan their lessons carefully and, in the best lessons, the pace of learning is fast, pupils are challenged to improve their skills, and expectations of behaviour and commitment are high. In lessons where the pace of learning is a little slower, whole-class sessions last too long. Occasionally, specific subject vocabulary is not explained sufficiently so that some pupils, particularly

those at an early stage of learning English, do not fully understand the tasks. However, relationships between staff and pupils are very good, so that pupils are confident in seeking help. The good marking of work often informs pupils how to improve and, at the end of lessons, teachers encourage pupils to assess their own learning. This is helping them to identify for themselves the next steps in their own learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched well by a variety of clubs, visits and visitors to the school. English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology are covered effectively, leading to good progress in these subjects. The staff are currently trying out some revised approaches to the wider curriculum to make pupils' learning more relevant and coherent. There are good examples of the beneficial effects of this in art and design, especially in Year 2, in physical education in Year 5 and in links between history, English and design and technology in Year 6. The children in Reception have a good range of experiences based on practical activities that make their learning thorough and enjoyable. The school has worked hard to extend the range of after-school activities, which are now good. Pupils especially appreciate the sporting opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision for pupils' care, guidance and support is good. Attention to pupils' safety is thorough and the school carries out all required safety checks. Induction to school is exceptionally good for Reception children and transition to secondary education for Year 6 is very carefully and skilfully managed. Additional support is also available from a trained counsellor for pupils experiencing difficulties in their lives. Teachers assess pupils' progress well and use assessment information effectively to plan work that makes demands on them in their learning. Monitoring of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very thorough and support is closely targeted to their identified needs. Systems to assess pupils who are learning English as an extra language are also good, but need to be more precise for those at an early stage of learning the language.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. This is why the school's outcomes for its pupils are so good, leading one parent to say, 'I doubt we could have found a better school for our son – he is progressing well in a happy environment.' The headteacher provides the drive for these high standards through her determination, skilled experience, and high expectations. She is well supported by other staff, particularly those in key roles. Governance has improved since the last inspection, and is now supportive but incisive. The good self-evaluation process is comprehensive, if a little cautious in its overall

judgements, and involves all interested groups. It leads to clear plans for improvement that are implemented effectively. Staff are held to account for pupils' progress, and resources are carefully deployed. The school's main strengths have been maintained since the last inspection. The school has good capacity to improve further, and gives good value for money.

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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	3	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	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?	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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To the pupils of

St Augustine's Catholic Primary School

St Austin's Place

Preston

Lancashire

PR1 3YJ

27 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming Ms Platt and me when we visited your school. You will remember that we came to check how well your school helps you to learn and get on together.

We were very impressed by how well you look out for each other, and how very friendly your school is. We feel that the staff give you excellent support in your personal development. They also make sure that you are safe and that you learn how to lead healthy lifestyles. You help them very well by your very good attitudes to each other and to your work. You said, 'We know that the staff value us.' That leads you to value each other exceptionally well.

We also feel that your school helps you to learn and make progress well. Some of you are already skilled in three or four languages, and we saw Year 6 learning another one: their Spanish accent would be recognised in Barcelona! I was also impressed by the care you take in drawing portraits, mixing delicate skin tones well.

We have asked the staff to make sure that you make the same progress in each class to help you get even better in your work. We have also asked them to provide more help for some of you who need support in learning English as an extra language. We think that you can help by making sure that you attend school every day possible, and keep on trying your best and behaving well. We feel, like you, that St Augustine's is a special place. You are lucky to have such a caring school. Enjoy it!

With best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson
Jennie Platt

Lead Inspector
Additional Inspector