



St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Morecambe

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119622
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280614
Inspection dates 29 June 2006 to 30 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Coniston Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Morecambe
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, LA4 5PS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01524 413032
Number on roll	207	Fax number	01524 425990
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Gary Norris
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr Steven Thornton

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 29 June 2006 - 30 June 2006	Inspection number 280614
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average sized primary school that serves a residential area with few signs of deprivation. The attainment of children starting in Reception is below that which is typical for their ages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Although a broadly average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the number with statements of special educational need is above average. There are small groups of looked after children and pupils learning English as an additional language. A higher than usual number of Year 6 pupils joined the school after Year 1. The school has basic skills teaching and Investor in People awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge the school to be satisfactory with strengths and providing sound value for money. The school judged overall effectiveness to be good. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) are good. In the 2005 national tests, standards were above average by the end of Year 6, but year by year these fluctuate according to numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Overall, achievement and progress are satisfactory, but uneven across the school. The main reason for this is the uneven quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Pupils' personal development is good and reflects the caring and supportive Catholic ethos of the school. Parents are rightly pleased with the way the school effectively cares for their children. Pupils enjoy their time in school and they are successfully encouraged to take a full part in all that is on offer. Pupils are appreciative of the good range of activities that enrich the stimulating curriculum, though not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their basic skills in other subjects to further consolidate and extend their learning. The school's links with other agencies are good. These provide opportunities that broaden pupils' experiences and the support they receive. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate and the school knows what it has to do to improve. The capacity to improve is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well, but the management of change has been slower than it ought to be.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the quality of teaching to that of the best.
- Make the most of all opportunities to use and develop basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills across the curriculum.
- Make better use of information from monitoring to ensure that improvements take place promptly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are above average and achievement is satisfactory. On arrival in Reception, standards are below those that are typical of children of this age. Children make good progress and most achieve the nationally expected goals and many do even better. All available evidence shows that progress is satisfactory overall, from Years 1 to 6. Although pupils make good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in some classes, the school's good tracking procedures show that not all pupils make as much progress as they could because the teaching is not always as good as it could be. However, the good progress in Year 6 means that the school is usually close to meeting its challenging targets. A concern for the school has been English standards, particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Early indications from the 2006 national test results show that they have improved well and the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 has increased.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make satisfactory progress towards their goals. The newly arrived pupils who are learning English as an additional language are progressing well. The school has been innovative and generous in providing these pupils with extra assistance.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils develop well as individuals because staff create an atmosphere of warmth, encouragement and trust. Pupils talk openly about feeling valued and the respect they receive. Their self-confidence and maturity prepare them well for future schooling and life. Good attendance demonstrates how much they like school. Pupils enjoy their lessons even when the pace slackens or activities are less challenging. They concentrate and behave well. Pupils take on responsible jobs sensibly, such as work on the school council, which contributes to the efficient running of the school. Life in the playground is lively and happy. Pupils play safely and a friendly face is rarely far away. Pupils have been convinced to eat more healthily and they know the value of exercise.

Close links with the church, including regular visits by the priest, help pupils to develop well spiritually. Pupils benefit from many cultural and multi-cultural activities, such as links with a school in Asia and visits from Zambian teachers. However, there is still room to improve their knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of today's society.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The positive atmosphere in all classrooms gives pupils a healthy interest in their work. Overall, teachers are well organised, present new learning clearly and use resources adeptly, such as interactive whiteboards, and even blackboards, to reinforce and strengthen learning. They often ask searching questions that challenge pupils' thinking and use praise well to raise their self-esteem. Teaching assistants do a good job in supporting pupils with specific needs.

In lessons where the teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge and strong expectations of pupils based on their knowledge of their skills and abilities. There is a brisk pace to lessons that ensures good learning. In the Reception class, a clear emphasis on basic skills is reinforced by a good blend of learning through play. Where teaching is satisfactory overall, teachers monitor pupils' progress well but, sometimes, the subject matter is not inspiring because it is not matched well enough

to individual pupils' needs. Part of the reason for this is the lack of consistency in marking and setting targets for learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and includes a variety of stimulating enrichment activities. Pupils have lots of opportunities to sing, learn musical instruments and perform in and out of school. These succeed in motivating pupils, broadening their horizons and putting their learning in context. The curriculum is also good in the Reception class. Throughout the school, the key basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and learning about health and safety are promoted well. Links between subjects are also developing well, but there is scope to develop even further the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in subjects like history and science to consolidate and extend the pupils' learning. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and for pupils learning English as an additional language. Individual learning plans are detailed and specific, and support staff are sensitive and helpful in group work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school is good at ensuring the health and safety of pupils. Pupils rightly feel safe at school, and are comfortable about confiding in staff if the need arises. All the procedures for safeguarding pupils are regularly double-checked by the headteacher, staff and governors. The school has introduced good systems for recording how well pupils progress in their work. Teachers make satisfactory use of these data to set relevant targets for individual pupils to improve their basic skills and to provide extra close support. Pupils find the targets useful. Pupils also say that they benefit from teachers' guidance through marking, but inspection findings show that marking is not consistently good in all classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors judge leadership and management to be satisfactory whereas the school evaluates it as good. The experienced and highly caring headteacher leads the school well, particularly in ensuring that barriers to learning are reduced. This is very important to the parents of pupils who have recently arrived at the school and are making good progress in learning English as an additional language. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which is properly supported by senior staff and the governing body. Care and personal development are rightly judged to be strengths. However, the headteacher and subject coordinators are not satisfied with pupils' satisfactory achievement and they are rightly disappointed when outcomes do not match some improving provision. The school's realistic development plan identifies appropriate improvements, such as the use of assessment information to increase achievement and improve teaching. Monitoring, although satisfactory, is not rigorous enough, so

some changes do not happen as quickly as they could, for example, to further improve the quality of teaching.

Financial management is prudent and the school has managed to use its funds well to ensure vulnerable pupils are equally well provided for. The governing body benefits from the good expertise of members, particularly in areas such as finance and education. However, their monitoring and evaluation of the school's work are at an early stage of development.

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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?	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	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	3	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	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	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

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To the pupils of:

St Mary's Catholic Primary School Coniston Road

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Lancashire

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29 June 2006

Dear pupils

Mr Scott and I really enjoyed being in your school this week. We are most grateful for your warm welcome, courtesy and the help you provided. Please give a special thanks to those who talked with us.

What we really liked about your school:

the improvements that have been made in English this year

your good behaviour, attitudes to school and the strong relationships you develop

the way that you all contribute to a safe and caring ethos in the school

the good range of activities that enrich your curriculum.

We have asked Mr Thornton and the teachers to make sure that the school continues to improve, particularly to make sure that all your lessons are as good as the best. We have also suggested that you have even more opportunities to use your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. You can be a great help by always doing your best work and following the advice from your teachers.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector