



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119623
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280615
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	London Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Fleetwood
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, FY7 6EU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 878445
Number on roll	166	Fax number	01253 878464
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Mark Gregory
Date of previous inspection	1 December 1999	Headteacher	Mr Mark Rogan

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school in Fleetwood that welcomes both Catholic and non-Catholic pupils. The proportion of pupils who receive free school meals is below the national average. Pupils are drawn from a wide social mix of families. The area has suffered from social and economic disadvantage in recent years. When pupils start school, there is a very wide spread of attainment that, overall, is well below that normally seen at their age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. There are a few pupils from minority ethnic groups, only one of whom is at an early stage of learning English. The school has achieved a Healthy Schools award.

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. Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation of its effectiveness. It has a warm, friendly, caring ethos and family atmosphere. It enjoys effective links with parents, the parish, the local community and neighbouring schools. Leadership and management, the overall quality of teaching and learning, the care pupils receive and pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development are all good. The curriculum is satisfactory, although scope remains for its creative dimension to be strengthened. Children make a good start to their time in school in the Foundation Stage through skilled teaching and a wide range of exciting learning activities. All these positive factors combine effectively to enable pupils to progress well throughout the school and to ensure that standards are rising. Parents strongly support the school, and are very happy with everything it provides for their children.

The school has improved since the previous inspection, notably to increase the use of information and communication technology (ICT) for learning and to make better use of assessment to set targets. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly but further work is needed to ensure the outstanding practice in some classes is used to raise the level of professional expertise throughout the school. The school provides good value for money, and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the monitoring of teaching and learning to share outstanding practice and improve the quality of teaching where it is satisfactory.
- Provide more creativity in the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards have improved in English, mathematics and science; the most recent results were just above the expected level, showing improvements on those of the previous year. At both key stages, there is a positive picture of results moving upwards over time.

When the children start school, their attainment varies widely but overall it is well below that normally seen, particularly in literacy, mathematics, and personal and social skills. The proportion of pupils of higher ability admitted to the school is less than half the national average. Skilful teaching in the Foundation Stage provides a good start and the children progress well. Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1, particularly in reading and mathematics. Teachers use assessment information effectively to set targets that challenge pupils to aim higher. Pupils in Key Stage 2 say they enjoy learning because the lessons are interesting and varied and they are shown what they must do improve their work. Consequently, all pupils continue to achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties also achieve well because they receive good quality support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is good. Parents are highly supportive of the positive atmosphere in school, and say it has 'a real community feel'. The very good relationships evident in the school community strongly promote pupils' personal and social development. They enjoy school very much, behave well, and consequently achieve well. Attendance rates are above average. Pupils are sure that bullying is not tolerated. They are polite, pleasant and friendly and show great respect for each other, staff and visitors. A strong sense of concern for the needs of others was demonstrated when pupils raised funds for Sri Lankan fishermen who lost their livelihood in the Tsunami. The school promotes pupils' health and well-being through the provision of healthy foods and the teaching of traditional games and activities to make pupils' free time in the playground a more positive experience. Older pupils willingly and sensibly carry out a range of responsibilities. The prefects ensure classes use the stairs safely, prepare the hall for worship and help in the playground. Pupils value the house system and hold democratic elections for house captains and express their views at house meetings. Class 'circle times' enable them to consider feelings and relationships. They are confident that staff listen to their views and are sure they are treated fairly. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, and the provision for cultural development has improved since the previous inspection.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and pupils learn well; consequently they make good progress. Teachers and teaching assistants are good role models, and address the pupils and each other with respect and consideration. Pupils respond by behaving responsibly in and out of lessons. Some of the teaching is outstanding. Dynamic, skilful teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2 and the Foundation Stage, is helping pupils in some classes make very good progress in their learning. In these lessons, teachers set interesting, often exciting, but always challenging tasks which pupils enjoy and throw themselves into wholeheartedly. Pupils say their teachers 'make learning fun'. Some teaching, however, is mundane and lacks sparkle. In these lessons, the tasks set do not have enough variety to keep pupils interested, their attention wanders and their learning slows. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and the information it provides is used to track pupils' further progress and set targets for improvement. Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in the use of computers to support learning in other subjects. The curriculum has some good features, particularly those that promote pupils' personal development. While there are some visitors from outside, for example, a poet and theatre groups, creative aspects of the curriculum are underdeveloped and form part of the school's current plans for improvement. Teachers work effectively together when planning work to ensure that pupils of the same age but from different classes are covering the same curriculum. There is a good range of trips and visits provided, as well as regular after school clubs, which pupils said they enjoyed but would like more. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the required areas of learning but outdoor learning facilities are not adequate. The school's commitment to pupils adopting a healthy lifestyle has been recognised through the Healthy Schools award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Effective arrangements promote good behaviour and maintain a high level of attendance. Pupils feel very secure in what is a well ordered and safe environment, and say 'the teachers are always there for us'. Requirements for child protection are in place and staff are very alert to any symptoms of distress. Pupils with learning difficulties are well supported. The needs of high ability pupils are well met, for example, through the local schools excellence cluster. Arrangements for pupils at risk and looked after children are secure. Careful attention is paid to the risks involved in out of school visits but the assessment of the on-site risks posed is not robust enough. Links with local agencies are good. Effective use is made of information about pupils' performance to provide them with clear guidance about their attainment and what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives clear direction and has a vision for improvement within a happy, supportive atmosphere. This has proved successful and standards have risen. Positive, caring relationships at all levels, firmly based on the principles and teaching of the Catholic faith enable pupils to achieve well personally and academically. Senior managers, all staff and the governors share and contribute to this vision. Good links exist between school and parents, who are highly appreciative of the school and feel their views are respected. Equal opportunities are promoted strongly and the management of the needs of pupils with learning difficulties is good.

The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses, shown by the complete match of school and inspectors' judgements. Managers evaluate performance in their subjects

thoroughly to plan further improvements. The quality of teaching is regularly checked to help improve teachers' professional expertise. However, examples of the best practice in the school are not shared widely enough. The Foundation Stage is well managed, and ensures the youngest pupils make a good start to their education. All resources are used carefully to help pupils' learning, for example additional support for pupils who are particularly able and talented or those with learning difficulties. Governance is good. The governors know their school well, and provide challenging yet valuable support. There is good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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	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	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

Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE
T 0207 421 6800
F 0207 421 6707
www.ofsted.gov.uk

St Mary's Catholic Primary School, Fleetwood
London Street
Fleetwood
Lancashire
FY7 6EU

9 November 2005

Dear House Captains

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. You all made us very welcome, so we enjoyed our visit very much. We would like to let you know what we found out. Please share this letter with all the children in your house.

Your headteacher, the staff and the governors have created a good school where you feel safe and happy.

You come to school regularly, behave well, work hard, enjoy using the computers and make good progress.

You are all friendly, polite, helpful and caring towards others, especially the younger children and those less fortunate than yourselves.

You are encouraged to be healthy and play a useful part in the community.

We agree that many of your lessons are interesting and exciting.

We have asked your teachers to do some things to make your school and your progress even better.

We would like the teachers to improve their already good teaching by sharing with one another the things they do really well.

We would like them to make the range of the things you learn about even more interesting and varied.

Yours sincerely,

Kathleen McArthur

Lead Inspector

Annex B