



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119633
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280618
Inspection dates 4 July 2006 to 5 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	The Hill
School category	Voluntary aided		Horns Lane
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Goosnargh, Preston PR3 2FJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 865369
Number on roll	91	Fax number	01772 863947
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Harry Phayre
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Moira Barron

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school where pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The school is in a beautiful rural setting and serves a socially and economically advantaged area. No pupils take a free school meal. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and no pupils need help in speaking English. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Attainment on entry varies because of the small number of pupils involved but is slightly above average.

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. It provides good value for money. The school is held in high esteem by parents who are appreciative of the very high quality of care that makes this such a welcoming and friendly school. The school provides extremely well for pupils' personal development. Excellent partnership with external agencies and the support from teaching assistants make a very good contribution to this provision, especially in guiding those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Teaching is good and, consequently, pupils make good progress. Results in national tests as pupils leave school show standards have been consistently high. Test results in Key Stage 1 are above average and show good achievement. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well with many of them exceeding the standard expected for their age. The curriculum is rich and enhanced by a very good variety of clubs, visits and visitors. The children in the Foundation Stage enjoy practical activities but the small classroom and organisation makes it difficult for them to work independently and to have full access to role play.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an outstanding leader and has sustained high standards in the school. The focus has correctly been on numeracy and literacy, which are well managed by the headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The monitoring role in other subjects is less well developed. The school is not complacent and eagerly embraces change. Consequently, the school is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage.
- Extend the role of the subject managers in checking teaching and learning and setting targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Test results over recent years make it very clear that pupils leave school with high standards. When children enter Reception, their ability varies but overall is slightly above average. In response to good teaching they make good progress and, by the end of the Reception class, the majority reach and many exceed the expected learning goals for their age. They achieve very well in personal and social skills, providing a firm base for learning as they move to Year 1.

Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 fluctuate because of the small numbers involved but are generally above average. Mathematics gained the highest results in 2005 because of the high number of pupils reaching above average levels. The evidence from inspection is that pupils of all abilities are suitably challenged and make good progress.

Good progress in Key Stage 2 means pupils consistently perform very well in national tests at the end of Year 6. The school is not complacent and challenging targets are met. Last year's focus was on increasing the proportion of pupils reaching above average levels in English and mathematics. Recent test results show this aim has been fulfilled.

The school has a deserved reputation for its support for helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Outstanding personal development makes a major contribution to the high standards achieved. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. This school's ethos is rooted in its Catholic faith. Pupils respect each other and give serious thought to how they can help others. Moral and social development is very strong and parents and pupils insist this is a happy school because all are welcoming and respectful. Relationships are very good and, consequently, pupils enjoy school and attendance is good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils work hard. Year 6 pupils are mature and sensible and have sustained a sense of enthusiasm for all that is offered to them.

Pupils have a very good knowledge of keeping safe and healthy. Many join in the early morning 'wake up, shake up' activities that they say get them going for the day. With support from visitors, pupils gain a thorough understanding of the dangers of drugs and alcohol. Pupils play an excellent role in this close-knit community. They share their talents by entering in local craft shows and eagerly raise funds for charities. Pupils' confidence in numeracy and literacy, enhanced by opportunities to manage the school shop, prepares pupils very well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and include many positive features. Lessons are managed well so that pupils learn in an orderly environment. Relationships are warm and friendly with much joshing which makes lessons enjoyable. Other strengths include the effective use of questioning both to assess previous learning and to extend knowledge. This skill is used very effectively in numeracy lessons when teachers draw from pupils their methods of calculation so that all learn from each other. The good variety of activities and resources used capture pupils' interest so they want to learn. The school has focused on extending the use of information and communication technology (ICT), and computers are used effectively to support learning. Some outstanding teaching was seen in Year 6 where the pace was brisk and expectations high. Much is achieved in the final year in school. On occasions in other classes, time is not used well and teachers talk too much so that there is not enough time for activity. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with an array of activities available, although

some tasks are too directed by staff so that children do not have the chance to come up with their own ideas. Marking is thorough with good examples in Year 6 of comments that enable pupils to take the next step in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with some very good features. Teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of the different ages and abilities in their classes. Use of literacy, numeracy and ICT in other subjects is very good. Personal, social and health education includes practical activities and drama so that important messages are acted upon in the daily life of the school. A visiting musician and teacher of French add breadth to the pupils' experiences. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and is correctly based on all of the required areas of learning. However, the classroom is small and not organised efficiently to encourage independent learning. Creative development is not seen as being as important as other areas of learning, and the role play areas were underused during the inspection. These areas lack a clear focus because of the storage of old resources which restrict the use of better equipment. The hall is used for some activities but this entails moving resources daily and it is not as attractive an environment as the classroom.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Detailed individual education plans drawn up by teachers and pupils guide staff well and allow these pupils to play a full and active part in daily life. The range of after-school activities is very good. Pupils especially appreciate the sporting and music opportunities and look forward to taking part in the school's famous drama productions. Many visits and visitors also enhance the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Thorough attention is given to pupils' welfare and all required safety checks are carried out. Child protection procedures are rigorous and all staff are fully trained. Induction to school is very good both as children start and as they move on to secondary education. Year 6 pupils get a taster of secondary education as they work on tasks set by their next school, leading to a smooth transition. The school is quick to spot when additional help is needed and make prompt contact with professionals if a pupil needs support to overcome a personal difficulty. Excellent contact with parents and external agencies ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have their very specific physical and academic needs fully met.

Teachers assess pupils' progress well and use assessment information effectively to plan work that matches pupils' ability. They involve pupils in their own learning by setting targets and discussing with them how they are progressing. This is most effective with the older pupils and their clear understanding about how to improve has helped them to achieve high standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has provided outstanding leadership over many years, ensuring the school sustains high standards as well as keeping the pupils' personal development at the core of the school's mission. Parents and pupils feel valued. As one parent was led to say, 'The school works well with parents to give the children the best time within school.' The headteacher has earned the admiration of all involved with the school.

The self-evaluation process is good. The school's accurate picture of its strengths and areas to develop leads to detailed plans for improvement which are having a positive impact, especially on standards in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Management of literacy and numeracy is good. Other subject leaders, including leadership of the Foundation Stage, do not have a full grasp on standards and progress within the school. A review of their analysis of pupils' work and their action plans shows a lack of focus on what really needs attention to improve standards.

Governance is good. Governors are well informed and involved in school. They are very aware of the importance of increasing numbers and plans are in place to extend care at the start and end of the day as requested by parents. The school recognises the importance of staff development and the school has Investors in People status and pupils benefit from more experienced staff. These many strengths in leadership and management put the school in a strong position to move forward.

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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	1	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	2	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	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	3	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 Francis Catholic Primary School

The Hill

Horns Lane

Goosnargh

Preston

Lancashire

PR3 2FJ

6 July 2006

Dear Pupils

Many thanks for the wonderful welcome you gave me when I visited your school. How lucky you are to learn in a good school in such a wonderful area. I will remember with great pleasure my stroll along your Millennium Walk. I appreciated everything you told me about your school and it has helped me to write this report.

I agree that yours is a very friendly school and you behave very well and work hard. You told me you could not think of anything that you would change to make it better. I am glad you feel safe and I think the way the school looks after you all is excellent. You also know how to keep healthy as I saw when many of you took part in the 'wake up, shake up' sessions. I agree teachers make your lessons interesting and this enables you to make good progress. Many of you and your parents told me how you will miss Mrs Barron when she retires and I agree she has been an outstanding leader.

I have asked Mrs Barron and the governors to look at the experiences offered to the younger children especially because there is limited space in their classroom. The teachers are also working on ways to find out what needs to be done to improve your school.

I hope you enjoyed your barbecue and other end of term activities. These will be just a few of the wonderful memories I am sure you will have of your time in school.

I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt

(Lead inspector)