



# Lea St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 119634  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280619  
**Inspection dates** 2 February 2006 to 3 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Jackie Barnes

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Darkinson Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Lea Town
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 729881
<b>Number on roll</b>	93	<b>Fax number</b>	01772 729801
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Katherine Taylor
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Elizabeth Schofield

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 2 February 2006 - 3 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280619
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out over two days by an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small school with four classes, situated close to the south western boundary of Preston. It serves the village of Lea Town and the surrounding area. The school is oversubscribed, and some pupils live nearby but most arrive by bus or car. Children start school in the Reception year with different skills and abilities, but overall the intake is about average. All pupils have English as their home language. Entitlement to free school meals is low. The school welcomes all pupils, and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about 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. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation. It is well managed and has a supportive, friendly atmosphere that encourages learning. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. They make good progress when they start school and achieve well by the end of the Reception year and by Year 2. Many pupils continue to make good progress, with almost all achieving at least the expected standards for their age by Year 6. However, progress is too slow for a minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 who could achieve better standards. Teaching assistants support individual pupils well, and in the early years, their work benefits the learning of all the children. Pupils' personal development is good; they enjoy school, are well behaved, keen to learn and attend well. Teaching is generally good, although written planning for pupils' learning is not precise enough. Assessment information is used well to ensure good support for most pupils. Value for money is good. The school has significantly improved all the areas identified in the last inspection and has the capacity to improve further.

not applicable

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4, so they can continue to achieve the good standards evident at the end of Year 2.
- Identify more clearly in teachers' planning the learning expected for pupils with different capabilities, so their progress towards their targets can be readily checked.
- Build on the good practice in the early years to ensure the work of teaching assistants in Key Stage 2 makes a significant impact on pupils' progress in lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good overall. Although individual children vary in what they know and can do when they start school, overall they are about average for their age. They make good progress and by the end of the reception year, almost all have achieved the goals for the age group with many exceeding these. Good progress continues to be made in Year 1 and, by Year 2, the 2005 national test results showed that standards were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The most capable pupils achieved very well, especially in mathematics.

National test results for Year 6 pupils had declined over two years but recovered well in 2005 when overall results were a little above average. The number of pupils taking the tests in 2005 was small and so the performance of a single pupil could make a substantial difference to results. Nonetheless, the best results were in English and science where all pupils achieved at least the level expected for their age and over half achieved the higher level in science. The results in mathematics were average, which was an improvement on the previous year, but did not reach the targets set by the school.

The overall results indicate that in 2005 pupils made average progress from Year 2 to Year 6. Currently, work in lessons, in pupils' books and the school's records indicate that progress varies through Key Stage 2. Many pupils make good overall progress in basic skills, especially those with learning difficulties and disabilities, and the most capable pupils. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and looked after children also make good progress, and some are high achievers. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' overall progress tends to slow, and a few pupils across the ability range make less progress than expected, especially in mathematics and writing. Progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6, with the older pupils working well towards meeting their challenging targets for 2006.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, enjoy school and attend well. They are confident, have respect for themselves and others, and behave very well. They know about things that lead to healthy lifestyles, including the dangers of drug misuse and the importance of personal relationships. They feel safe in their school, know how to avoid conflict and trust the staff to listen to any concerns or ideas. They use their growing independence and leadership skills well when given the opportunity. Overall, this creates a positive family atmosphere which supports learning effectively and successfully develops the skills and understanding needed for pupils' future well being. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good, and well supported by the faith community. Pupils are also involved in the wider community, with concerts and fundraising. They are able to compare their own circumstances with those of others of their age around the world, including the advantages of other ways of life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Staff have supportive relationships with their pupils that help them to achieve. Literacy and numeracy are taught systematically. Lessons are well prepared, have a brisk pace, and maintain pupils' interest. Learning is enhanced considerably by pupils' positive attitudes, their sense of fun and willingness to cooperate with each other. Sometimes, the introduction to lessons is too prolonged and their enthusiasm wanes. They learn particularly well when involved in practical work, especially in information and communication technology (ICT). However, in most lessons pupils are keen to participate and eager to answer questions. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses and make good use of opportunities during group work to reinforce teaching points for individual pupils. This approach generally works well in encouraging progress, although the teachers' assessment of what pupils with different capabilities are intended to achieve is rarely identified in their written planning. As a result, it is difficult for the school to check regularly that pupils are

making consistent progress towards their targets, especially on the rare occasions when pupils have been taught by several different supply teachers as in the Year 3 and 4 class. The planning of teaching and learning in the Reception year is very thorough. It is closely linked to the assessment of individual children's needs and supports the good progress of all pupils, with teaching assistants having a clear role to play. A similar approach for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to achieve suitably high standards throughout the school. In Key Stage 2, teaching assistants are not always used to best advantage in promoting pupils' learning, especially when the introduction to lessons is lengthy.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. Particularly effective is the impact of improved resources for ICT on pupils' skills and confidence, such as pupils in Years 5 and 6 receiving their homework and discussing their progress with their teacher on-line. Due attention is given to providing lessons and experiences so pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Learning is enhanced by visits to places of interest and by visitors to school, which pupils talk about with enthusiasm. A good range of clubs and after school activities for pupils in Key Stage 2 contribute to their self confidence and social and leadership skills. Pupils appreciate the extended time for work in subjects such as history and geography, which enables them to study in greater depth and complete their work carefully. The school is still at the early stages of identifying gifted and talented pupils. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and many achieve the levels expected for their age.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for and protected by the attention of staff and safety procedures that are well known and regularly checked. Relationships are warm and supportive and help pupils to feel safe enough to be adventurous in expressing their ideas and in their physical activities. Work in lessons and day to day examples encourage healthy lifestyles and self esteem. Pupils appreciate being part of a school family and look forward to being with their friends. In general, they are successfully encouraged to work towards high standards through targets and personal praise. Pupils of all ages respond well when allowed to work independently, and many have the personal skills to do more of this. The good links with secondary schools encourage older pupils to be well informed and confident about the next stage of their education.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The school is well led by a capable and experienced headteacher, supported by a well trained governing body, and has the confidence of its parents. This is a small school, with all staff carrying extensive

responsibilities. They fulfil these well, ensuring pupils' personal development is successfully promoted, new ideas are introduced and National Curriculum subjects are kept under regular review. Information and data on pupils' attainment and progress are thoroughly interrogated and used well to identify areas for improvement and individual pupils who need support. This works well for most pupils, but is not yet fully effective for those who are gifted or talented. There are sound procedures for self-evaluation, which include the views of parents and pupils, and clear priorities for improvement are supported by suitable action plans. The school has a good record for making improvements, including to accommodation and resources, and curriculum development with national initiatives, such as the focus on healthy lifestyles, is successfully taken into account.

The school's evaluation procedures accurately identified the need to raise standards and accelerate the progress of pupils in Key Stage 2. National test results have significantly improved but, despite the school's efforts, the progress of some pupils in Years 3 and 4 is still affected by having several supply teachers. It is a challenging situation for a small school, although determination to minimise the impact on pupils is strong. Further support for learning in these year groups is due to be implemented very soon, including keeping a closer check on progress.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Mrs Elizabeth Schofield

Lea St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Darkinson Lane

Lea Town

Preston

Lancashire

PR4 0RJ

4 February 2006

Dear Children

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You helped me to see how much you enjoy school and appreciate your friends. You behave well and look after each other. You trust your teachers to keep you safe, and most of you make good progress with your work. Your school makes sure you have opportunities for sport and you enjoy the clubs and visits to places of interest. Your teachers take care to make sure you learn well, and they look for ways to make school better.

I have asked them to help you to make quicker progress before you transfer to your secondary school, and to use all they know about your work to help them to do this.

I enjoyed my visit to St Mary's very much, and send my best wishes to you all.

Yours faithfully

J M Barnes

Lead inspector