



# St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Longton

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119637  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280620  
**Inspection dates** 17 May 2006 to 18 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Chapel Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Longton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire PR4 5EB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01772 613402
<b>Number on roll</b>	210	<b>Fax number</b>	01772 613440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Paul Walker
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bernadette Wood

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 17 May 2006 - 18 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280620
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This average sized school is situated in the semi-rural area of Longton near Preston. The pupils come from a wide area covering four parishes and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. Almost all pupils are from white British backgrounds; with a very small number from minority ethnic heritages. An average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a small number have a statement of special educational need. The overall level of the children's development when they start school in the Reception class is average and this includes pupils from across the full range of ability.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. This judgement matches the school's own evaluation and supports the headteacher's accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Parents are highly satisfied with the work of the school and they appreciate the improvements brought about under the leadership of the new headteacher. Pupils are well cared for and supported within a strong framework of Catholic values. Behaviour and relationships are good and attendance is above average. Pupils develop into sensible young people who take on responsibilities willingly. Teaching is satisfactory so pupils make satisfactory progress and reach average standards. The school's focus on improving writing is having a positive effect but boys' writing remains a weakness in some classes. Higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged in lessons and many did not reach the standards of which they are capable in the 2005 Key Stage 2 national tests. Standards in the Foundation Stage are average and teaching is satisfactory. However, inadequate outdoor facilities restrict how well children can learn when outdoors.

A well focused programme of professional development and productive partnerships with other schools and the local authority are supporting improvement. The school's capacity to improve is evident in improvements in pupils' behaviour, standards in writing and improved systems to track pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics. Improvements are still required in the pace, variety and excitement of learning in some lessons and in the way that teachers help pupils to know how to improve their work. Though standards have fluctuated since the last inspection, improvement has been rapid during this current school year and is satisfactory overall. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards of higher attaining pupils, and of pupils' writing, especially boys.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching by ensuring that more lessons include a variety of learning activities that stimulate and excite pupils and provide suitable challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- Ensure that all pupils have clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of the outdoor play area for Reception pupils in order to provide more opportunities to learn in all the areas of the curriculum when outdoors.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Pupils start school with broadly average standards and they make satisfactory progress. Results of Year 6 national tests were significantly above average in three out of the past five years. They dipped to average in 2005 and, in relation to pupils' capabilities, standards were not as high as they should have been, especially at the higher levels. The school broadly met its

targets, but they were not challenging enough for higher attaining pupils. Future targets are more challenging because the analysis of pupils' progress has improved and targets are set more accurately. The work of current Year 6 pupils and the school's information on their progress show that standards are average and that most pupils are on course to reach the standards expected of them in relation to their prior attainment.

In 2005, Year 2 pupils reached broadly average standards, which was lower than the previous year because of unavoidable staff absence. Above average proportions of pupils reached higher levels in mathematics and reading, but boys' standards were lower than girls', particularly in writing. The school's work on improving writing across the school has helped to raise standards overall, especially in Year 2 and Year 6, but there remain some classes where boys' writing is weak. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and they receive well targeted support. Children enter the Reception class with average levels of development. They make satisfactory progress and reach average standards.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, a view supported by parents, and this is reflected in pupils' good levels of attendance and punctuality. In lessons, they behave well and pay attention but, where lessons lack variety and challenge, pupils are not particularly enthusiastic about learning. They willingly and enthusiastically take on responsibilities, for example, as classroom monitors, house captains, playground buddies and choir prefects. Through the school council, pupils develop an awareness of good citizenship and know their ideas are taken seriously and acted upon. For example, they helped to set up playground buddies and provide better playground facilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils form good relationships with adults and each other and they feel happy and safe in school. Because of recent improvements to playground activities and equipment, bullying rarely occurs. Pupils have much involvement with the local community through links with theatre groups, newspapers, sports associations, police, organisations for the homeless, and, further afield, links with the English National Opera. Pupils are aware of the benefits of healthy eating and exercise and know about the potential dangers to their safety.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well so that lessons proceed without disruption. Relationships with pupils are supportive and encourage pupils to want to learn. Lessons are well focused and pupils know what they are expected to learn because it is explained to them at the start. Teachers provide

good role models, helping pupils to develop good social skills. The best practice, which needs to be more widespread, includes encouraging pupils to be inquisitive and find things out for themselves, and skilful questioning that encourages pupils to think hard and work out solutions to challenging problems.

Lesson planning does not always provide different learning activities to match the wide range of pupils' abilities and needs. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged. Some lessons do not excite pupils enough and pupils can begin to get restless. Teachers' comments in books encourage pupils and examples of good marking show them how to improve their work. However, pupils are not always clear what they have to do to improve. Occasionally, poorly presented work is accepted and pupils get into bad habits. A number of new initiatives, such as involvement in The University of the First Age, are helping to improve the quality of teaching by focusing more on how pupils learn effectively.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It meets all statutory requirements. However, whilst providing for the needs of most groups of learners, the curriculum does not offer enough support for higher attaining pupils or those with special gifts or talents. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for through well-targeted support provided by teaching assistants and teachers. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly physical activities, are enthusiastically supported by pupils and parents. These activities help to promote pupils' awareness of healthy living. Visitors to school, outside visits, and a residential visit for older children, help to stimulate learning and pupils' social development. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage meets the needs of most children but planning for all areas of the curriculum outdoors is limited by the inadequate outdoor play area.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory overall. Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Teachers and other adults know pupils' individual circumstances well and are sensitive to their needs. Pupils feel that their views are listened to and their concerns addressed. Child protection requirements are clear and all adults in the school have had training in child protection matters. Health and safety issues are secure and understood by staff and pupils. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear targets that help to improve both their learning and their behaviour. Good liaison with outside agencies brings these pupils further well-targeted support. There are examples of good practice in providing pupils with guidance on how to improve their work, for example, in literacy in Year 6, but pupils do not always get enough guidance on how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. The new systems to track pupils' progress, particularly in mathematics, are helping to identify and tackle underachievement quickly and raise the aspirations

of pupils and staff. Pupils do not have enough access to computers outside lessons to develop their independent learning and ICT skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's commitment to providing a supportive and challenging school environment for all pupils within a Catholic framework of values is understood by pupils, staff, parents and governors. She has the overwhelming support of staff, governors, parents and pupils. Parents appreciate recent improvements in pupils' attitudes and behaviour, the quality of the environment and communication with parents. These are the result of the headteacher's energetic quest to raise standards since her appointment at the start of the school year.

The headteacher has an accurate view of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. Priorities for improvement have been identified through thorough analysis of pupils' achievements, observation of work in class and consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Local authority support and a well focused programme of professional development have equipped staff to bring about improvements, for example, in managing pupils' behaviour and raising standards in writing. Senior and subject leaders are better prepared to take on greater responsibility for improving standards and teaching, though their work is in the early stages in most subjects.

Improvement has gained pace significantly during the current school year, so, despite standards that have fluctuated since the previous inspection, improvement overall is satisfactory. Governors are highly supportive of the current agenda for improvement and key governors are directly involved in monitoring developments. Finances are well managed and the school gives satisfactory 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>	<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>	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	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<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	2	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>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	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>	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	3	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

<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

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St Oswald's Catholic Primary School

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17 May 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work in lessons. Many of you were curious to know what we thought about your school so I am delighted to be able to tell you what we thought was special about it.

You, the pupils, are a credit to your school and your families. You behave well and enjoy your school. We were impressed by the changes your school council have made to improve playtimes and by the number of you who enjoy playing with the younger children. We have asked the school to improve the outdoor play area that the very youngest children use to play and learn. We were pleased to see that so many of you make the most of the many extra activities that your school provides for you. We can see that the staff take good care of you. They know you very well and give you plenty of support and help. We agree with you that your headteacher, together with the teachers and governors, are working hard to improve your school.

Some of you told us about the targets that the teachers give to you that have helped you to improve your work. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that all of you understand more clearly just what you need to do to improve your work. We have asked the school to carry on with the good ways they have found to help you improve your writing and to make sure that everybody gets better at writing, especially some of the boys. We could see that you work hard in lessons but we would like to see more of you doing really challenging work. We have asked the school to think of ways of making lessons as challenging and interesting as it can.

You can help by continuing to try hard and do your very best. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and that you all do well in the future.

Best wishes

Gillian Salter-Smith (Mrs)

Lead inspector