



St Charles' Roman Catholic School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119650
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280625
Inspection dates 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Mark Williams

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Knowles Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Rishton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Blackburn, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 886110
Number on roll	191	Fax number	01254 882784
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Father Martin Dowd
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Dorothy Casey

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 31 January 2006 - 1 February 2006	Inspection number 280625
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

St Charles' is a Catholic primary school in Rishton, an industrial town on the outskirts of Blackburn. There are 191 pupils on roll. While the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average the percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above. Pupils enter school with attainment broadly in line with national expectations but this varies year on year.

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 providing its pupils with a good standard of education. It provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation of its effectiveness and support the views of the overwhelming majority of parents and children. It is outstanding in promoting the personal development and well-being of its pupils. The school has successfully ensured its mission statement 'Bring forth Christ' is evident in all aspects of its life and, as a result, ensures that every child matters.

Pupils make good progress overall and, by the time they leave school at the age of 11, achieve standards that are above the national average in English and science. Standards in mathematics are in line with national averages. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. The Foundation Stage (Reception class) provides good quality provision and pupils make good progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils' attitudes towards learning, as shown in their enjoyment of lessons and behaviour, are excellent.

Teaching is good and enables pupils to learn well. The school encourages pupils to work together and has high expectations to what the children can achieve. Marking and target setting, however, while good in some classes are not consistent across the school.

The curriculum and other activities provided are good as are the care, guidance and support offered to the pupils.

Leadership and management are good, with very strong and effective leadership provided by the headteacher. The school is aware of its strengths and areas for development, although its planning for improvement is not always sharply focused. Nonetheless, the school has good capacity to build upon its achievements and improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistent approach to marking and target setting across the school.
- Ensure planning for further improvement makes clear the steps to be taken and the success to be expected.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good overall and have improved since the previous inspection. This is because of the good teaching that builds upon previous learning and develops outstanding pupil attitudes.

Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment that are broadly in line with national expectations. They make good progress in gaining knowledge, skills and understanding throughout the school.

At the age of 11, pupils reach standards in English and science that exceed national averages. The number of pupils achieving the higher levels in the national tests in these subjects is high. The improvement in the results in science since the last inspection is very good. The number of pupils gaining higher levels in mathematics has also improved and is now broadly in line with national figures. The school meets the challenging targets it sets itself.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points and are challenged and supported well by the teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Provision in this area is outstanding. Inspectors believe the school was too modest in celebrating its success in this area.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development are excellent and are based on everybody's commitment to the strong Christian ethos and sense of community. Pupils' cultural development is good and is enhanced by learning about different faiths and cultures to their own.

Pupils display outstanding attitudes towards their work. Very good relationships exist and behaviour is excellent. Pupils are very polite and take pride in their school. They feel safe and report that they enjoy lessons very much. They are aware of health and safety issues. For example, in a physical education lesson, pupils were observed successfully and sensibly using a range of high and low level apparatus to develop skills in balancing. At the lesson's conclusion, they dismantled equipment and returned it to its usual position in a highly efficient manner. Rigorous procedures exist to ensure that key policies such as child protection are fully implemented. Attendance is good. There are a very low number of unauthorised absences, due in the main to holidays being taken in term time.

The school successfully encourages pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles, evidenced by their healthy eating and regular exercise. As a result, the Lancashire Healthy School status, which includes the standard for Emotional Health and Well-being has been achieved.

Pupils' contributions to the school and wider communities are good. For example, the school council is well established and pupils enjoy responsibilities such as acting as break and lunchtime monitors. Excellent relationships exist with the parish church and a local secondary school. Pupils raise funds for various charities. The good progress they make in their academic work means they are already developing good skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with many strengths. The result has been improved standards and progress in English, mathematics and science since the previous inspection.

A major strength is the excellent planning that caters for all abilities. Teachers skilfully question pupils and extend their thinking. They have high expectations of pupils. Lessons are taught confidently and imaginatively and teachers 'go the extra mile' to bring learning alive. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance learning.

Pupils show great enthusiasm in lessons with high levels of motivation from reception to Year 6. This is because teachers encourage pupils to solve problems and plan some of their own learning.

Teaching assistants play a very important part in lessons, effectively supporting those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and helping them to make good progress.

Assessment is good and the thorough tracking of pupils' progress provides teachers with a reliable picture of how well pupils are doing. There are some good examples of target setting and marking from individual teachers. However, this approach is not consistent across the school. As a result, not all pupils fully understand their own strengths and weaknesses nor have the opportunity to assess their own work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum, including that in the Foundation Stage, is good because it meets the needs of all learners well and supports successful teaching and learning. It is strongly enriched by visits and a good range of after school clubs that pupils greatly enjoy. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn French and play musical instruments.

The school gives a large amount of time to English and mathematics and has increased the time available for science. This has resulted in improved levels of achievement in these areas.

Meaningful links are being established between different subjects to make the curriculum more creative and relevant. In particular, good progress has been made in widening opportunities for writing across the curriculum.

There is a very successful programme of personal, social and health education. This helps pupils to develop a very good understanding of healthy living and also to consider important issues in their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Provision is good with some outstanding features. The school's Christian ethos and the highly positive relationships form a strong basis for effective learning and personal development. Parents and pupils hold the support received from the school in high regard. The strong partnership between parents and the school encourages pupils to do their best.

Very effective systems are used to support pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties. They are identified early and support systems put quickly into place. Rigorous procedures are used for child protection and safety. This enables pupils to feel safe and secure.

Good assessment accurately measures progress, but pupils' involvement in setting and reviewing their own targets is in the early stages of development. There are, however, very good opportunities for pupils to express their views in lessons and plan some of their own learning.

The school council has given pupils the chance to contribute to school improvements, particularly in the area of playground games.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and are driven by the very strong and effective leadership of the headteacher. All staff are fully committed to the school's aim and 'go the extra mile' to ensure it is an inclusive community and a good place to be. As a result, no major area of current provision is less than good.

The school's self-evaluation procedures take into account the views of pupils, parents, staff and governors and provide accurate information regarding the school's strengths and areas for development. Subject leaders contribute well to these processes. The committed governing body very effectively holds the school to account and assists the headteacher in reviewing performance and financial planning. However, the school's improvement plan does not always clearly identify what steps need to be taken next and what success can be expected.

As the local birth rate falls, the governors and the headteacher continue to take decisions to enhance the school's standing in the local community. An example of this is the recent establishment of an after school club. Parents appreciate such initiatives and hold the school in high regard.

Good progress has been made in improving standards in science and mathematics since the previous inspection in October 2000. This proven track record of improvement demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve even further.

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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?	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	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?	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?	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

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The Pupils

c/o Mrs D Casey

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2 February 2006

Dear Children

As you know Mrs Mawer and I recently visited your school for two days. We would like to thank you for the lovely welcome you gave us. We agree with Mrs Casey, the governors, your parents and yourselves that this is a good school. We know you are proud to be its pupils and really enjoy being here.

This is what we liked most:

your behaviour and attitudes to school and each other are excellent

all grown ups in the school care for you very much

you work very hard in your lessons

your teachers and all adults in school have high expectations for you

your headteacher leads your school well

you all live out your mission statement: 'Bring forth Christ' to the full.

We know you are always trying to make your good school better. To help you in this we have asked the teachers to ensure you are all involved in setting and reviewing your own targets for future learning.

We wish you ever success for the future!

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools