



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Brindle

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119669
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280629
Inspection dates 13 June 2006 to 14 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bournes Row
School category	Voluntary aided		Gregson Lane
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Hoghton, Preston PR5 0DQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 853473
Number on roll	116	Fax number	01254 851536
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Paul Binks
Date of previous inspection	1 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Frances Fordyce

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 13 June 2006 - 14 June 2006	Inspection number 280629
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves mainly white British pupils and a few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The area has little social and economic deprivation and the entitlement to free school meals is small. Attainment on entry and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are broadly average. Very small proportions of pupils speak English as an additional language or are in the care of the local authority. The school went through a period of turbulence around 2003 that adversely affected standards, morale and number on roll. The school has Investor in People and Healthy Schools status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspection team agrees with the school's accurate self-evaluation that it is satisfactory with good features. Evidence from test results, monitoring by the local authority and parents' views show the school to be improving at an acceptable rate. The school gives satisfactory value for money. Across the school, standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. This is an improved picture since the low point in 2003. However, the school is fully aware that further improvements are still necessary, particularly in writing. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage (Reception) are satisfactory. Parents and pupils report that behaviour has improved greatly and together with the above average attendance, the good behaviour plays a large part in the good personal development of pupils. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. The improvement in teaching is the result of better procedures for assessment and the greater use of assessment information to plan lessons. Nevertheless, targets for pupils' learning are still too general, do not focus sufficiently on individual needs, and are not referred to when teachers mark work. The satisfactory curriculum motivates and interests the pupils, but opportunities are missed to use and develop writing skills in other subjects. Pupils and parents appreciate the good care the school provides, and its links with outside agencies are strong. Pupils with extra needs, including those looked after by the local authority, receive good support and progress well. All pupils benefit equally from what the school offers. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent improvements owe much to the effective leadership of the headteacher. The school's progress amply demonstrates that it has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and increase opportunities throughout the curriculum to use and develop writing skills.
- Improve target-setting for individual pupils.
- Ensure that marking indicates how well pupils are progressing towards their personal targets and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Children arrive in Reception with the full range of abilities and make satisfactory progress. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are broadly average, with a small number of pupils exceeding the typical learning goals. Progress across Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory and standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 6. The school has focused very strongly on reading and mathematics and progress is better in these areas. Targets for national test results are realistic and challenging and lately the school has met or exceeded them. However, writing standards remain lower than they should be, because:

- there are too few opportunities to write in other subjects

- writing targets are too general, particularly for higher attaining pupils. As a result, work is not matched accurately to the needs of the individual pupil.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average. Satisfactory progress is promoted by independent work, where pupils research and design their own pieces of work. For example, in Year 6, pupils do personal topics on local places of interest. Pupils with extra needs make good progress towards their targets because of the good support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. According to staff, parents and pupils, behaviour has improved recently and inspection evidence shows it to be good. Attendance levels are much higher than the norm and pupils thoroughly enjoy school. Attitudes to learning are good and pupils are proud of their achievements. Just occasionally, concentration wanes when the pace of learning slows. Pupils are developing average basic skills that prepare them satisfactorily for future schooling and the world of work. Spiritual and cultural development has improved and is now good, which is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and recognise that there is a need to support those less fortunate than themselves, both in the local community and further afield. Pupils work together well and show courtesy and consideration most of the time. They play safely and readily adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils demonstrate responsibility through an effective school council, and do important tasks around the school. Reception children play a significant role in the good induction procedures for the new starters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Across the school the main strengths include:

- planning that is detailed and matched to group needs
- high levels of useful homework that consolidate learning and give pupils the chance to work with their parents
- the quality of art teaching, for example, the school makes excellent use of the outdoor resources in Years 3 and 4 to produce living sculptures
- the strong support for pupils with extra learning needs that promotes their good progress.

In Reception, there is a satisfactory mix of teacher-led activities and ones that the children choose. In Years 1 to 6, the good procedures for tracking pupils' achievements provide teachers with strong guidance for setting general targets for learning. However, these targets are not sufficiently precise to enable pupils to make good progress.

Moreover, they are not specific enough for teachers to give clear enough guidance about each pupil's achievements and what they need to do next. The setting of general group targets is a recent development and the school recognises the need to go further and match work more closely to individual pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum meets statutory requirements and most of the needs and interests of learners. All pupils benefit equally from what the school has to offer. In particular, pupils who have extra learning needs are well supported so that they have the same opportunities as other pupils. A strong and effective emphasis on personal development has led to improvements in spiritual and cultural development. However, there are missed opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in all subjects across the curriculum. Too often, excessive use of prepared worksheets holds back the pace at which writing can improve. The curriculum is effectively enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and out-of-school activities. Pupils enjoy these and speak warmly of the opportunities presented, such as the effective development of their knowledge and understanding of health and safety matters.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pupils feel safe and secure, particularly since the new perimeter fence was erected. All staff know the pupils well and provide sensitive support when needed. Child protection procedures are robust and all staff have recently been trained. Staff are quick to support any pupil who is vulnerable, for whatever reason. The school works successfully with a range of outside agencies to help these pupils. There are good procedures for welcoming new Reception children to the school. Procedures for monitoring attendance are effective and attendance rates are high. A fairly recent and successful initiative is the introduction of procedures to track and monitor pupils' academic achievements. The information is used well to monitor pupils' progress and adequately sets targets for groups of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Evidence from a wide range of sources points to a school that has gone through difficult times, characterised by changes in management, falling rolls and lowering of standards and achievement. These indicators are improving, mainly due to: good leadership by the headteacher who has brought greater rigour and focus to the school; supportive governors who bring a lot of relevant expertise to their roles; and hard-working staff who want to improve. As a result, improvement is well established, but the school's effective self-evaluation procedures and plans show clearly that there is more to do. The process of review benefits from the regular input of parents, pupils and the local authority. For example, it is recognised

by parents that the headteacher has very limited time for management because she teaches every day. Sound financial management means that there will be sufficient funds for her to have more time for management from September 2006. This gives her more opportunities to implement the priorities identified in the effective school improvement plan, such as improving the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and improving pupils' progress. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, but they do not have effective formal procedures to check whether the school's aims are being fully met, or whether expenditure is targeted accurately and providing 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>	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?	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	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ 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	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	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	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?	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

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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13 June 2006

Dear Pupils

I really enjoyed being in your school this week. You are very friendly and sensible young people. It was a privilege and a pleasure to work with you and the staff. I was delighted that many of you wished to talk with me and impressed by the courtesy and help you provided.

What I really liked about your school

The good progress made by children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The way that you enjoy the school and the work that you are given.

Your good and improving behaviour.

The way you play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy.

The important contribution that you make to the running of the school and the contribution that you make through donations to charity.

The good art teaching and the living sculptures made by Year 3/4 class.

The strong support that your parents give to the school.

The good leadership of Mrs Fordyce.

I am asking your teachers to help you to improve the quality of your writing. At present, your work is sometimes good and sometimes not so good. You can help your teachers by always doing your best writing and trying to improve on your previous work. You can also make sure that you meet targets set for you and follow all advice and guidance that your teachers give to you. If you do not understand what they are asking you to do make sure that you ask.

I wish you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Heap
(Lead inspector)