



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 119670
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280630
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Brooke Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Chorley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire PR6 0LB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01257 262659
Number on roll	174	Fax number	01257 271412
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr James Tilston
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Lynda McLoughlin

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school with a strong Catholic ethos. In addition to the pupils of statutory school age, 17 children attend the nursery each morning. There are similar numbers of boys and girls. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic families. Numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are about the same as the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. Attainment on entry is slightly lower than the norm. The inspection took place in the week following statutory tests and assessments. The results of these are not yet known and therefore not referred to in this report.

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 many outstanding features and this judgement agrees with the school's own evaluation. Parents echo this view, as do pupils and many other parties involved in helping them to succeed. Many improvements have been made since the previous inspection and standards are rising. With outstanding leadership, management and governance the school is giving good value for money and has a good capacity to keep improving.

Many children join the Nursery and Reception classes with lower than expected standards in communication, language and literacy, number, and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress. The whole Foundation Stage is well managed and there is good teaching over the full range of areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are about average in mathematics, reading and writing and there has been outstanding development in pupils' computer skills.

Progress slows to satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but picks up dramatically, especially in the later stages of Key Stage 2, where pupils make outstanding progress. Last year's results in national tests showed that after all factors had been taken into consideration the school was in the top 5% of all schools nationally in terms of the value it was adding to pupils' learning.

Teaching is good overall and peaks in Years 4, 5 and 6, where it is often outstanding. From the nursery onwards, pupils' personal development is excellent, largely as a result of an outstanding curriculum, which strongly promotes it, and the exceptional care support and guidance extended to all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on raising standards by improving teaching and learning in Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. They achieve well and leave school having exceeded expectations. Parents are very happy with the progress their children make. Whole-school targets are challenging and nearly all are met. Within age groups, no group of pupils achieves significantly better or worse than any other. The rate of progress is, however, uneven. Having made good progress in the Foundation Stage, pupils join Key Stage 1 at about an average standard. They also leave it at about average, having made satisfactory progress. Scores in assessments have followed the national picture for each of the last five years in reading, writing and mathematics but with slightly fewer than average pupils attaining the higher Level 3. Following very carefully targeted initiatives to improve teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 there are early indications that this year's results, particularly for mathematics, are better. With the exception of a downturn two years ago, standards in Key Stage 2 have been rising for the last five years. Test results from

2005 show that pupils had made outstanding progress in science, with the school attaining results that placed them in the top 2% of all schools, and in mathematics, where it is in the top 9%. Results were slightly lower in English but still showed that the school is in the top 16% of all schools nationally. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are also exceptionally high.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding feature of the school. Many pupils join the school with below average personal and social skills but by the time they leave they are charming young people with strong spiritual, moral and social values and a keen awareness of people from other parts of the world. They are well placed in society and have bright economic futures. Enthusiasm for learning gains pace throughout the school, with a marked leap in Years 4, 5 and 6 in response to teaching which strongly encourages independent thinking and learning. Relationships are outstanding and contribute enormously to a happy and harmonious atmosphere in which pupils enjoy their education and behave well. Nevertheless, a few pupils in Years 1 and 2 lose concentration when activities overrun. Calm, sensible movement around the school helps to reduce accidents and demonstrates pupils' growing awareness of safety. Masses of high quality resources encourage pupils to play energetically and the school's commitment to promoting healthy lifestyles is abundantly clear in pupils' awareness of healthy eating. Pupils contribute enormously to the community. Carol singing in the local supermarket and gifts of harvest baskets are greatly appreciated. Attendance has been higher than the national average for the last three years and is still improving.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. Parents feel their children are well taught and the school's own checks confirm this. Teaching is at its best in Years 4, 5 and 6, where it is frequently outstanding. It is good in the Foundation Stage but weaker in Key Stage 1, where it is more often satisfactory and pupils learn more slowly as a result. This is partly the result of teaching not sufficiently adapting enough to take into account the needs of younger pupils.

- Computers are particularly well used throughout the school, often being used to help pupils to work with growing independence. Skilled use is made of interactive whiteboards to provide visual stimulation and arouse curiosity. In an outstanding lesson in Year 5, pupils worked in teams with intense concentration as they programmed a robot to negotiate obstacles. Teamwork is good. Teaching assistants are used well; they are given clear instructions and they offer excellent support to individuals and small groups. Behaviour management is good but teachers, especially in Key Stage 1, occasionally allow pupils' concentration to stray and this slows

learning. Lessons are usually well planned but at times work is not varied enough to ensure that all pupils are challenged equally whilst having equal opportunities to work independently.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is very carefully planned to ensure that all pupils enjoy a rich range of subjects in a well balanced timetable. In the Foundation Stage, an exceptionally wide range of well resourced practical activities helps to encourage children to learn through experience, play and discovery. The personal, social and health curriculum is excellent, contributing hugely to pupils' development and well-being. Enrichment is outstanding. Many exciting and well-attended activities take place out of class, bringing learning to life, providing a multitude of new learning experiences and adding to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. Visitors from other cultures and visits to their places of worship contribute enormously to pupils' cultural awareness, and involvement in local community activities gives pupils many insights into the society they live in. Residential visits help to promote independence and responsibility.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils benefit from outstanding care, guidance and support. Excellent assessment procedures underpin much of this, particularly at the top end of Key Stage 2. By keeping a particularly close check on pupils' progress, staff are very quick to spot changes in individual progress. Extra help, often involving specialists from other agencies, is quickly arranged. This is particularly helpful for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and allows them to achieve equally with other pupils. Great care is taken to reduce anxiety, for instance when children are moving from Reception into Year 1 or preparing to move to another school. A comprehensive system is in place for reporting to parents. This is informative and greatly helps them to contribute to their children's education. Potential risk in activities is always checked and safeguards put in place to prevent accidents. The school is a safe and secure place where pupils are well protected and thrive in the company of adults whose suitability to work with children is always checked.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership, management and governance are outstanding. Leaders and governors have been hugely instrumental, turning the school round from an all time low seven years ago, when the headteacher was appointed, to a position where it is now highly thought of in the community and is achieving academic standards that put it firmly in the higher echelons of all schools nationally. An excellent programme of staff training, mentoring and performance management have paid dividends. Excellent relationships

with other bodies have been established. The school has become recognised as a particularly good and popular placement for student teachers and support workers, who bring new ideas and energy to enrich learning for pupils. The school demonstrates a good capacity for continuing improvement and this is embraced in an excellent improvement plan, which is founded on extensive and accurate information gained from accurate, self-critical monitoring and evaluation. Relative weaknesses in Key Stage 1 have been identified and the actions taken to remedy them are showing signs of success. Parents are seen as a vital part in the process of raising standards. They, and all other interested parties including pupils, are regularly consulted and their views acted upon. Governors are questioning and supportive. They have an excellent awareness of where their input is useful and appreciated. They do not interfere in the day-to-day management of the school but listen intently, facilitate improvement through astute financial planning and help senior staff to focus on raising standards by relieving them of mundane duties.

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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	1	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	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	1	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 School Council

Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School

Brooke Street

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Lancashire

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18 May 2006

Dear Pupils

It was a pleasure to visit your school the other day. Thanks to those of you who spared a bit of time to talk to us and especially to those prefects who showed great maturity in telling us about your school. We take your views very seriously and it is very reassuring that your staff do too.

As you've probably gathered, we liked your school. I hope your staff haven't stopped smiling because we've said a lot of nice, richly deserved things about them, such as how they are good teachers, take great care of you and make sure that coming to school is something you enjoy. If anything, we are saying even nicer things about you. It was good to see you working so enthusiastically in most lessons and helping each other. Playtimes looked fun too.

One of our jobs is to make suggestions about how your school could be even better. It's a tough one that, because the staff seem to have it all in hand. We did notice though that you're not doing as well in Years 1 and 2 as in the rest of the school so we've asked the staff to make an extra effort to put that right. Harder work for you I'm afraid.

Anyway, keep up the good work.

All the best

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector