



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119680
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280632
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005
Reporting inspector Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bury Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Withnell
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Chorley, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 830400
Number on roll	49	Fax number	01254 832317
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr D Southworth
Date of previous inspection	2 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr M Braithwaite

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 19 October 2005 - 20 October 2005	Inspection number 280632
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school. The area served is socially and economically advantaged. Children are taught in two mixed age classes. A very small number take free school meals. A similarly small number are from minority ethnic groups and need help because English is not their first language. Very few pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Apart from the headteacher, all teaching staff have changed over the past year and this has been an unsettling time for the school. Stability has now been re-established.

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 an acceptable quality of education. This is similar to the school's own evaluation of its work. It is a welcoming school and the care and support of the pupils are good. Pupils are a pleasure to be with and show a genuine concern for each other. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. More needs to be done to encourage pupils to come up with their own ideas. This is very much the case in science. Pupils from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 make satisfactory progress and reach the levels expected for their age. The school is aware that tracking procedures need to be sharper to ensure all pupils are working at the right level. A carefully planned curriculum is enriched by a variety of clubs and visits. The exciting new outdoor area is the first step in extending the experiences offered to children in the Foundation Stage to ensure that the provision meets their needs. The school is soundly led and managed but it needs to seek the opinions of all involved when setting priorities for improvement. The issues raised in the last inspection have been effectively tackled and the new teaching team shows the capacity to improve the school. Value for money is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of science by providing more opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations.
- Make the experiences for children in the Foundation Stage more relevant to their needs by making more use of the new outside resources and providing more staff training.
- Improve teaching by implementing a system to track pupils' progress and to guide teachers when planning lessons that match the range of ages and abilities.
- Involve all stakeholders in evaluating and planning for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter the school with standards that are typical for their age. They settle happily in the Foundation Stage and make satisfactory progress to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception class except in their physical and creative development which are below average. The school is alert to this and is improving both resources and opportunities to improve skills in these areas. The small number of pupils makes the results of tests an unreliable indicator of the school's overall performance because one pupil represents a high proportion of the results. Nevertheless, results in Key Stage 1 have been consistently above average. Following staffing disturbances, standards dipped in 2005 with no pupil reaching above average levels. With improved stability in the staffing, standards are improving and pupils are working at the level expected for their age. Results of tests in Key Stage 2 have been closer to average and this remains the case. Targets are ambitious and the school generally comes close to reaching them. Overall standards in science are satisfactory but insufficient attention is given to investigation. As a result, pupils lack the

confidence to suggest how they can test their ideas and conduct experiments. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning through English as an additional language make good progress with help from staff and their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school underestimates the pupils' personal development. It judges it to be satisfactory but the inspection found it to be better than that. Relationships are good and pupils enjoy school. Evidence of this can be seen in their attendance which is much higher than average. Behaviour is good. Pupils work hard but some lack the confidence to work independently. More use could be made of the library to encourage independent research. Pupils willingly carry out responsibilities including representing others as a member of the school council. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' understanding of other cultures is satisfactory but older pupils lack an in-depth understanding of how traditions affect everyday lives. Spiritual development reflects the school's Catholic status and pupils show reverence in assemblies and a willingness to help those in need. Pupils say they have a good idea about how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The new staff are enthusiastic and willing to improve. Lessons include many positive features which make learning interesting, such as the use of interactive whiteboards and computers which sustain pupils' enthusiasm. Lessons are managed well and run smoothly. The teaching of literacy and numeracy to older pupils is good. The lessons are interesting and have good pace so that much is achieved. A more practical approach is needed to science so that pupils gain the confidence to initiate their own investigations. Pupils appreciate the fact that teachers write positive comments on their work and set them targets so that they know how to improve. The lack of detailed tracking of pupils' progress means that occasionally tasks are not pitched at the correct level. Lessons were seen where tasks were too hard or too easy and this did not lead to effective learning. In the Foundation Stage, the warm relationships ensure children settle happily and enjoy learning. Rhymes and activities make learning fun. Sometimes too many instructions are given and this confuses the younger pupils. Opportunities for selecting their own activities are included but these occasionally lack sufficient purpose to extend learning sufficiently. Support staff make a positive contribution to learning, although this help is not always available in Key Stage 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school that the curriculum is satisfactory. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are extended effectively in other subjects. In Key Stage 2, the system of teaching numeracy and literacy to single age groups is helping teachers match the curriculum to pupils' prior experiences. The school is enhancing the opportunities offered to children in the Foundation Stage. Currently, the organisation of the classroom and opportunities for creative and physical development are not sufficiently developing these skills. Visits and weeks devoted to some special activity are looked forward to with anticipation by pupils and lead to effective learning as in, for example, the residential visit for older pupils where they take part in a wide range of exciting, outdoor adventures. Extra-curricular activities are varied and pupils are especially successful at football. It is difficult for a small staff to organise a lot of activities but, when the need arises, they endeavour to ensure pupils participate in important events.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school and this is better than the school's evaluation. Parents are happy with the procedures in place to look after their children. Good attention is given to pupils' safety and the necessary checks are carried out to ensure pupils learn in a secure environment. External agencies are used well to ensure rigorous risk assessments are carried out, especially for safety on school visits. Child protection procedures are well established and more training for all staff is imminent to update their knowledge. The school gives good attention to healthy lifestyles. A healthy option is available at lunchtime and this is becoming more popular. The school has achieved several certificates from the local authority to acknowledge the attention they give to warning pupils of dangers and to encouraging healthy lifestyles. Visits to the local secondary school and visits by its teachers to St Joseph's lead to a smooth transition to the next stage of the pupils' education. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for later life because the school pays due attention to teaching them the basic skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The inspection agrees with the school that leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher leads the school well keeping a family ethos at the heart of its daily life. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted. Other aspects of management are not as strong. The tracking of pupils' progress and the critical evaluation of what is happening in school are not as advanced as they should be. The implementation of these procedures has been delayed because the staffing disturbances last year took up a lot of the headteacher's time. However, the lack of rigour in these procedures means that priorities in the school development plan are not in line with the most recent evaluation of what is working well in school and what needs attention. More

collaboration with stakeholders, including governors, is needed to ensure all opinions are considered when setting priorities. Governance is satisfactory, although governors tend to rely too heavily on the headteacher for information and they need more first-hand information to enable them to fulfil their role as a critical friend to the school. The newly appointed chair of governors has a very clear view of how to extend the role of governors. The headteacher, staff and governors have successfully weathered an unsettling time and are now very aware of what needs to be done; they are eager to get on with the job. The wonderful new facilities for children under the age of 5 are indicative of their ability to bring about change. The school now has the capacity to improve and move forward.

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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	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

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	2	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	2	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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21 October 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for your friendly welcome. I very much appreciated your willingness to talk to me about your school. You told me you were happy and I have shared your small concerns with staff and you will see that some of them appear in this report.

I liked these things the most.

You try hard in lessons and are eager to please your teachers.

I agree that teachers tell you how to improve your work and set you targets so that you can check for yourselves how you are doing.

This is a friendly school and you behave well; you told me you feel safe.

You respect your teachers and each other and are especially eager to help those less fortunate than yourselves.

Mr Braithwaite and the staff work together to ensure the school runs smoothly.

I have asked your teachers to look at the following things to make the school and your progress even better.

You told me science lessons were not always interesting and I agree. I would like teachers to give you more opportunities to carry out investigations.

I would like the activities in the reception class to be more suitable for the children there. You will see by the new equipment outside that teachers are already doing this.

You told me you find some work too hard and I saw some of this and also some that was too easy. I would like the teachers to keep a close check on your progress so that work is always set at the correct level for you.

I would like more people involved in helping your teachers to do the right things to improve your school.

I hope you carry on enjoying your education and I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt (Lead Inspector)

Annex B