



Our Lady and St Anselms Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitworth

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119697
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280638
Inspection dates 6 June 2006 to 7 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Carole Cressey

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	John Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Whitworth
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Rochdale, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 853545
Number on roll	121	Fax number	01706 853545
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Danny O'Malley
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr John Cunningham

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small Catholic primary school is located in the village of Whitworth on the outskirts of Rochdale. All the pupils are White British and come from a mixed variety of backgrounds. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school believes itself to be good. Inspectors agree but also judge that there are many outstanding features in the school, which help pupils become successful learners, sociable individuals and responsible members of their school community. Parents speak in glowing terms of the exceptional care their children receive. They are extremely proud of their very well behaved children who love coming to school, are excited by the many new experiences the school provides and who work hard in their lessons.

Children get a good start in the Reception class and most reach the early learning goals expected of them by the time they move into Year 1. Teaching is good and in Years 5 and 6 it is outstanding. Assessment systems are excellent but have not always been used as well as they should be by new and temporary staff. As a result, standards in 2005 fell from being well above average to being broadly average. The school soon recognised the weaknesses and standards are now rising again.

The school is very well led and managed. Its success is due to the headteacher's determination and considerable skill in promoting an ethos where parents, staff, governors and the Catholic community work well together to ensure pupils thrive in a Christian environment. One parent summed up the views of the majority of parents when he said, 'The school turns out good people and this is to be valued above all other successes.'

This is a school which gives good value for money and is very well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that new staff use the school's excellent assessment systems so that pupils achieve well and reach the standards of which they are capable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of children when they first start school is broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the standards expected of them before they enter Year 1. This good start is built on well in Years 1 and 2 and by the age of seven, national tests show that standards are above average. In most years this good progress has been maintained through Key Stage 2 and standards by Year 6 have been significantly above average. However, between 2004 and 2005 the school experienced a period of instability due to staff changes and this adversely affected standards at the end of Year 6. As a result, in the 2005 national tests, standards, although broadly average, were not as high as in previous years and the school failed to reach its targets in English and science. The school reacted swiftly and found out that temporary staff had not used the school's assessment systems well enough. Expectations of what pupils could do were too low. A number of pupils did not reach the high levels of which they were capable, especially in science. Consistently

good teaching in all year groups is now ensuring that standards are once again rising. The school's own assessments indicate that standards at the end of Year 6 are likely to be above average in all subjects and the school's ambitious targets will be met. As a result of a number of successful initiatives, such as helping boys discover their preferred ways of learning and using topics such as the World Cup to extend their literacy skills, the progress of boys is accelerating and more boys are now achieving the higher levels than in previous years. Pupils with learning difficulties are supported exceptionally well and as a result, most make rapid progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school is an exceptionally happy and safe place, in which pupils thrive and develop an appetite for learning which their parents value greatly. Pupils see school as an exciting place to be and attendance is above average.

Pupils show immense pride in their achievements, especially in art, singing, dance and drama. They work together in lessons, exchanging ideas, sharing their skills and encouraging each other to do well. Older pupils, for example, talked proudly of their excellent behaviour during a recent residential visit; unlike pupils from other schools visiting at the same time, they were all safely tucked up in bed and sound asleep by the time it was lights out. Pupils have a mature respect for people of different faiths and cultures. Year 2 pupils have pen pals in neighbouring schools where there are different ethnic groups. Older pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'multicultural week' which helped them to understand the different religions and customs of people in their nearby town. The school council provides pupils with excellent opportunities to develop a sense of community responsibility. The school councillors are proud that they 'can make things happen', such as improving the playground by the addition of attractive seating areas. Fully aware of the dangers of too much sun, the pupils have also requested sun umbrellas!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are consistently good throughout the school and in Years 5 and 6 they are outstanding. In the Foundation Stage, the good range of challenging tasks enables children to make rapid strides in their learning.

Lessons throughout the school are thoughtfully planned to meet the needs of different ages, abilities, interests and preferred ways of learning. High quality resources and varied challenging activities grasp pupils' interests. Staff use the interactive white board very well to add pace and interest to the lessons. Pupils enjoy learning because the teachers make lessons fun and exciting. They say that 'Teachers don't shout when you get things wrong, they just help you get it right.' Classrooms are exciting places

where high quality displays provide clues and reminders to help pupils become successful and independent learners. In an excellent Year 5 and 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were 'MI5 agents decoding messages'. What they were really learning about was how to use calculators to multiply five numbers together: it was an exciting way to learn more about multiplication. Rigorous assessments provide a very clear picture of the pupils' progress and attainment. The information is now used very well to set challenging individual targets to help pupils to achieve their very best. Pupils put great store on their targets and are very clear about what they need to do to move on to the next level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is underpinned by the school's Christian faith and values. It is exceptionally well planned to challenge both boys and girls, to inspire them to learn and to help them become responsible members of the school, local and world community. An excellent programme of social and health education provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety and healthy living. Topics, after-school clubs, visitors and well planned visits deepen pupils' learning and spark their curiosity in people, places and events across the globe. Special learning weeks engage pupils in exciting activities which deepen understanding and promote mature personal and social skills. The 'world of work week' gave pupils excellent opportunities to become entrepreneurs as each class became a small company, raising money from resources designed, made and sold at a profit. The teaching of French and German gives pupils a head start when they attend the secondary school. Specialist music, drama, dance and art teachers are engaged to extend the creative side of all pupils and also provide opportunities for talented pupils to excel.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are successful because of the excellent care, guidance and support the school provides. All staff are very vigilant in their care of pupils who are vulnerable. Staff identify pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties quickly and work well with a wide range of agencies to provide the extra help they need. Lunchtime sessions are planned for pupils who are particularly vulnerable. Here, excellent relationships and well planned activities and games help pupils learn to handle their anger, explore their feelings and deal with some of the difficulties they face at home and in school. This has a very positive impact on the progress they make in the classroom, both in their academic and personal development. Pupils feel very safe and know their teachers will always listen to their concerns, fears and worries in confidence. They especially value the 'worry box' which gives pupils an opportunity to tell an adult what is worrying them. Teachers track each pupil's academic progress carefully and set challenging targets to enable pupils to improve. The three way conversation between parent, child and teacher is greatly valued by the parents and helps them feel fully involved in ensuring their children make good progress in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good with outstanding features. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The headteacher, staff, parents, governors and the diocese work together to ensure that the school is one of which the whole community can be proud. The school's evaluation of itself is excellent and is pivotal to its continued success. Strategies are quickly and meticulously implemented to bring about desired improvements. This can be seen by how rapidly standards have recovered from the dip in 2005. The monitoring of teaching and learning concentrates on helping the new and less experienced teachers to rapidly reach the high standards expected by the school. The assistant headteacher has implemented excellent assessment systems and the effective use of these is crucial in ensuring that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

There is a tangible team spirit among the staff. This is because all staff are valued and encouraged to improve their skills. This is well evidenced by the fact that the school site-manager is training to be a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) assessor and using these skills to the benefit of the school. Governors challenge the school well and are rigorous in their desire to improve standards further and provide the best education for the pupils. The small size of the school can mean that any changes in staffing may have a detrimental effect on standards, as happened in 2005. Strategies are needed to ensure new staff are aware of the school's systems and high expectations so that inevitable staff changes do not harm pupils' education. This is a listening school that takes into account and acts on the views of its parents and children in order to provide a high quality education. The parents' confidence in the leadership and management of the school is rightly placed.

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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	1	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	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?	2	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	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

Our Lady and St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School

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OL12 8DB

6 June 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when I visited your school a short while ago. I so enjoyed talking with you and your teachers.

I could see that you enjoy your lessons and work hard in English, mathematics and science. You told me that your teachers made learning fun and exciting and I could see that as I watched some of your lessons. I particularly enjoyed a lesson in Class 4 where you were all being M15 code breakers. What a wonderful way to learn about multiplication.

I was particularly pleased to see how very well behaved and polite you are. I was especially pleased that you obeyed the rules about bedtime when you were at Kingswood and didn't let yourselves, your teachers or parents down.

Do you remember that some of you told me that the best things in your school were the artwork, the singing and the special learning weeks? Well, I agree with you. I listened to some wonderful singing from the choir and I loved your mural in the playground. The school council's idea to have benches and games to play with at break time is such a good one. You obviously know how to protect yourselves from the sun because you also asked for sun umbrellas. How very sensible you are!

I am so pleased your teachers are helping you learn about different people and places. You are so sensible to realise how important it is to understand how different people in other countries and in Britain live.

When we were talking together, you told me about your targets and how they helped you to improve your work. I have asked Mr Cunningham to make sure that, if you have new teachers, they quickly get to know about your targets so that they know how clever you all are. I think

you are very lucky to go to such a good school where your headteacher and teachers work so hard to help you learn.

I hope you will always enjoy school and that it will help you to become happy, sensible and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey

Lead Inspector