



Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131285
LEA Tameside
Inspection number 282191
Inspection dates 3 April 2006 to 4 April 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Sarah Drake CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holden Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Ashton-under-Lyne
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire OL6 9JJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 330 9521
Number on roll	218	Fax number	0161 330 9521
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Fr Francis Wadsworth
Date of previous inspection	30 October 2000	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Brown

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a small school which serves an area close to the centre of Ashton-under-Lyne. Broadly average numbers of pupils are eligible for a free school meal. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly smaller than average. Few pupils have English as an additional language but a growing minority throughout the school is at an early stage of learning English. The school has recently gained the Eco-School Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Our Lady of Mount Carmel is a good school. It provides an effective education that enables its pupils to achieve well and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Value for money is good. Guided strongly by its mission statement, the school provides a welcoming environment in which each pupil is valued as an individual. Pupils thrive in the supportive atmosphere. Their personal development is good and their behaviour is excellent. Good quality teaching makes pupils keen to learn. Those of differing abilities and stages of learning English all make good progress. Effective partnerships with others enhance pupils' learning. Sports, music and information and communication technology (ICT) are strong elements of the curriculum. Staff provide good quality care for pupils and sensitively help them understand how to move forward.

The school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness which is based on careful evaluation of its strengths and relative weaknesses. Good quality leadership and management have brought good improvement since the last inspection. The Foundation Stage has moved in line with current expectations of provision for young children but further work is needed, as recognised by the school, to create a lively, inviting learning environment throughout the Nursery and Reception classes. Similarly, although assessment of pupils' standards is good in some respects, there is not yet sufficient emphasis on identifying precisely what individuals need to do next to reach their full potential. In the light of its previous success, the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Refine its assessment systems to:

- clarify where individual pupils are making good progress or could be stretched further
- pin-point the specific next steps that individuals need to take to improve
- guide the strategies teachers use in lessons to help all pupils make the most of their talents.

Continue to develop the Foundation Stage so it provides a consistently stimulating learning environment for children.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. With the small numbers involved, children's attainment on entry to the Nursery varies from year to year but it is broadly average overall. By the end of the Foundation Stage most pupils are achieving the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning.

In the 2005 statutory tests Year 2 pupils achieved average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Above average numbers gained the higher level in mathematics.

Year 6 pupils reached above average standards in mathematics and science, with well above average numbers gaining the higher levels in these subjects. English standards were broadly average. Above average numbers reached the higher level in reading but very few did so in writing. The school reached its targets in mathematics but fell short in English. Over the past five years, Year 6 standards have been consistently above average, with variation from year to year in which subject has been strongest. Current standards in Year 6, including those for ICT, are also above average and the school is on track to reach its challenging targets.

Pupils make good progress. The school is particularly successful at helping pupils who achieve average levels at the end of Year 2 to gain the higher level at the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English progress well within the school's supportive environment.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy being at school and their attendance is above average. They appreciate the interesting activities that their teachers provide for them to do. Pupils are thoughtful of others' needs and also reflect well on how they can improve their own attitude to life. The result is that the school operates as a harmonious community. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They understand about human impact on the environment and the Eco group has been instrumental in improving litter disposal and recycling of waste. As yet there are few areas where they can show real initiative. Pupils collaborate well in lessons and in such activities as the school's popular productions and sporting competitions. Music and art are strong throughout the school and pupils have a good appreciation of other cultures; for instance, through Year 2's exploration of Mexican art, food and geography. Pupils of different nationality are fully included in work and play.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They act sensibly and safely, are cooperative and polite. They are keen to take on responsibilities and older pupils care well for younger ones as their special friends or play leaders. Pupils enjoy energetic exercise and healthy food. With their positive attitudes to learning and above average skills they are well equipped to make the most of the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and results in pupils making good progress. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and some lessons were of outstanding quality. Excellent behaviour and the warm relationships between adults and pupils are the foundation on which this good quality learning is based. Pupils of all abilities display good levels of concentration and application in their lessons and this has a positive impact on their progress. The best teaching builds very well on pupils' enjoyment and

enthusiasm, combining brisk pace with high expectations, excellent planning and classroom management to enable all pupils to meet challenging targets. This was evident in lessons on music, working with numbers and writing explanatory texts. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they develop pupils' thinking skills well through good questioning. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that work is stimulating and appropriate for those who need extra support. In the Foundation Stage, staff do not always capitalise fully on pupils' free play activities. Assessment is accurate and teachers plan work for three ability levels however, the targets they set are not sufficiently focused to take account of pupils' individual needs. In some lessons, although achievement is good overall, the progress of some higher attaining pupils is held back by a lack of opportunity to work independently at a suitably challenging level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is of good quality. Strong provision in English and mathematics helps to ensure pupils' future economic well-being. Activities are well suited to the needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language. Good attention is paid to substance abuse and relationships education. Extensive physical education activities, both in and out of lessons, make a strong contribution to pupils' awareness of healthy living. Specialist provision in art and music ensures pupils reach good standards in these areas. Visits and visitors add an extra dimension, helping to bring pupils' learning to life. Good use of the ICT suite and classroom smart boards adds greatly to the quality of the curriculum and sustains pupils' enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. ICT is now used well across a range of areas but there are few further links made between subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The bonds of affection and trust that pupils share with all adults in this inclusive school contribute strongly to their clear, confident view of who they can turn to for help. Parents and carers are delighted with the support offered to their children. One wrote, 'my daughter's confidence and levels in all subjects have increased as she has moved from year to year due to the enthusiastic and caring staff'. Arrangements to ensure child protection are in place. Health and safety procedures are carried out very effectively. Pupils with additional learning or language needs take a full part in all activities and progress well, thanks to the carefully tailored teaching and support that they receive. Teachers mark work thoroughly, providing appropriate praise and advice for improvement. Pupils know their group targets in English and mathematics. However, these are not specific enough to ensure that individual pupils attain at the highest possible level.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management create a positive learning environment in which pupils make good progress both personally and academically. The headteacher has a clear vision of how he wishes the school to develop and has worked well with others to bring about good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, ICT provision is now good and suitable procedures are in place to monitor teaching quality and take action when necessary. Subject leaders are taking increasing responsibility for initiating actions to improve their areas.

The school evaluates its provision, examines the standards achieved in tests and compares its results against national data. This has led to, for example, successful action to remedy weaknesses in science in 2004, with much improved results in 2005. The current focus on writing is also proving effective. Teachers record pupils' standards at the end of each year and use these to create group targets. However, they do not yet identify the expected or possible progress that individuals should make from year to year. The school does not keep sufficiently close track of where a pupil may be able to progress more quickly.

The school runs smoothly and is generally well resourced. However, uneven provision across the Nursery and Reception years, combined with the barely adequate outdoor resources shared by both classes, diminishes the quality of pupils' experience in the Foundation Stage. Governors hold the school to suitable account and are prepared to challenge the management. Sound financial arrangements and effective overall leadership ensure that pupils receive a good all round education.

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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	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?	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	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	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?	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	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	2	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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our two days with you, and your willingness to talk with us helped us to understand why you enjoy your school so much.

Here is a list of things that we particularly liked about Our Lady of Mount Carmel:

- each pupil is valued as an individual and offered good quality care and support
- you make good progress in your learning and reach above average standards
- your teachers organise interesting lessons so you want to work hard
- good quality relationships throughout mean the school is a happy community
- your behaviour is excellent and you think about other people's needs
- you have good opportunities to use ICT and to take part in sports and other healthy activities
- when your headteacher and other staff decide something about the school could be better, they take successful action to improve things.

This is what we have asked your teachers to do next to help your school improve:

- record and track your progress in more detail so that teachers can pin-point exactly what each of you needs to do next to make even better progress
- make sure that children throughout the Foundation Stage receive continuously good provision.

Your job will be to continue to work hard and enjoy learning as much as you do now.