



# St Ethelbert's RC Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105222  
**Local Authority** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 287164  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Marie Cordey

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Melbourne Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Bolton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire BL3 5RL
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333036
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	256	<b>Fax number</b>	01204 333037
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Fr A Swift
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Mandy Messham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 November 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27–28 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 287164
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average sized school. The vast majority of the pupils are of White British heritage and there are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A below average proportion of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The school has gone through a very difficult period because of some staffing issues. It is led by an acting headteacher.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Ethelbert's is a satisfactory and improving school that is highly regarded by pupils and parents. It is a warm and welcoming community that leads to pupils being thoughtful and caring. It succeeds in its mission statement of ensuring that each person is loved, valued and respected. The acting headteacher has successfully steered the school through an unsettled period, maintaining its strengths while taking action to tackle areas requiring improvement. Parents recognise and value her significant contribution to their children's development.

Good quality care is provided for pupils and this contributes to the development of their personal skills. No effort is spared in trying to ensure that they are happy, and feel secure. Pupils respond to this environment by behaving well and having good attitudes to learning. This good provision leads to attendance that is above average, demonstrating how much pupils enjoy coming to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Children in the Foundation Stage make a positive start to their school life because they are helped to settle in well. Pupils' attainment when they enter Nursery is in line with expectations. Satisfactory provision for pupils of this age results in the appropriate progress, and they reach standards typical for their age when they move into Year 1. Pupils' achievement continues to be satisfactory throughout the rest of the school and standards reached by pupils by the time they leave school at the age of 11 are average overall. In English, they are above average, while in mathematics they are below average. This is because teachers have good knowledge and expertise in English and pupils make good progress in the subject. Teachers are less confident in mathematics and the work set is not always well matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. Some more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in mathematics because they are not challenged enough. Nonetheless, the curriculum and teaching are satisfactory overall. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and they are set suitable targets for improvement. However, assessment arrangements are not implemented consistently in all classes. This means that not all pupils are aware of how they are doing in their work or how to improve it.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has vision and the determination to improve the school, and she has quickly secured the full cooperation of staff. School leaders are aware of the general strengths and weaknesses of the school, although an inaccurate evaluation of the pupils' achievements caused school leaders to judge almost all aspects of its provision too generously. This demonstrates that, although there are systems for checking the effectiveness of the school, they do not provide accurate information about the impact of actions taken to bring about improvement. Nevertheless, because staff are motivated by energetic leadership, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make better use of assessment information in order to match activities to the needs of all pupils more closely.
- Improve the level of challenge in mathematics for the more able pupils.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation procedures so they give detailed information about the impact of actions being taken to improve the school.
- Improve the quality of information given to pupils about how well they are doing and how they could improve their work.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory across the school. From average standards on entry, they continue to make satisfactory progress and attain average standards overall by the age of 11. However, this masks the significant difference between English and mathematics which has been the case for some years. At the end of Year 6, standards in English are above average and pupils achieve very well in the subject, especially in reading. This is because teaching is planned more effectively to target individuals' needs. In mathematics, standards are below average and pupils do not achieve their potential, particularly those who are more able. This is because the work planned does not challenge pupils enough. This has improved and recent changes to planning is beginning to have a positive impact. The school sets challenging targets but these have not been met in recent years. The school has refined its assessment procedures to ensure that targets will be met this year, and the current pupils are on course to meet them.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very friendly and cooperate well in the many paired and shared activities planned for them. They talk about their feelings and take an active part in charity work. They have a good understanding of racial equality issues. Pupils act sensibly and contribute well to school improvement through the school council. They support their classmates well, especially through their work as 'peer' mentors and 'buddies'. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes and the way they relate to adults are good. They like school and are keen to learn. Pupils know how to stay safe. They also know about how to stay fit and healthy because of their very good work on the 'healthy school' initiative. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their schooling because the school instills a positive attitude to learning, and they are equipped with the key skills in literacy and numeracy.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. In English lessons, pupils are motivated by interesting activities that are clearly matched to their learning needs. As a result, they make good progress. Teachers and pupils are enthusiastic and committed and they enjoy working together. In mathematics lessons, the learning activities do not always match the pupils' needs and so progress is satisfactory. Better use is being made of information and communication technology (ICT) to help pupils learn. Teachers are making better use of assessment information to set targets for pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. However, pupils are not yet fully involved in assessing their own learning and some higher attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are helped to make satisfactory progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Effective provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to ensure that they make the same progress as their classmates. The needs of the more able pupils are not sufficiently catered for. The curriculum is being changed to tackle this in order to match work to individual needs, especially in mathematics. A very good range of educational visits and visitors, residential experiences and out of school clubs and activities enrich the curriculum well. The school is successful in promoting pupils' personal, health, social and emotional education. Attention to healthy lifestyles and personal safety is woven meaningfully into the curriculum. There is improving provision for ICT.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Guidance and support are satisfactory. The quality of care is good. Parents say that the school is 'full of lovely people who really do care about the children'. Staff work well with other agencies to enable vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make satisfactory progress. Child protection and safety procedures are well established. Pupils say they feel safe because the staff deal effectively with any problems, such as bullying. They are well prepared for starting school and make a smooth transfer to secondary school. The assessment of pupils' academic progress and target-setting has been improved, but these are not yet consistently implemented in order to raise standards. More able pupils in particular are not always given sufficient guidance, challenge and support in order to improve their work further. This contributes to their lower standards in mathematics.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders have been successful in ensuring good care for pupils which is reflected in their positive personal development. The acting headteacher has determination and vision and, with other senior leaders, is working with all the staff to improve the performance of the school. There are signs that this renewed activity is having a positive impact. The performance of higher attaining pupils in mathematics is now at the core of the school's improvement planning. Tracking of pupils' progress is improving so that underachievement can be spotted at a much earlier stage. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are not yet effective enough, however, because they do not monitor the impact of improvement strategies. The governing body is now fully represented and governors are very involved in the life of the school. They have not rigorously monitored its performance in the past but are now holding the school to account. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to your school. You were very friendly and obviously enjoy being at school. We think your school is satisfactory. The things we think are best about your school are how well you are looked after and your excellent attitudes and care for others. Your standards in English are high and you make good progress in reading and writing. You enjoy being at school and your parents think this is a very good school.

Your acting headteacher is trying to make school as good as possible for you and really wants to improve your work in mathematics. This is because standards are not as high in this subject as they should be. Those of you who are good at mathematics could get better results. Your teachers know how each one of you is doing in your work and have given you targets to reach. However, we think they need to give you more information about this and advice on how you can improve your work. You could help by making sure that if you are not clear about anything, you ask your teachers for help. Make sure you know exactly what you need to do. Your teachers want to help you very much. We are sure you will do this because you are so keen to learn and do well.