



Our Lady and St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Heywood

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105819
Local Authority Rochdale
Inspection number 287340
Inspection date 15 January 2007
Reporting inspector Robert Robinson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sutherland Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Darnhill, Heywood
Age range of pupils	3-11		Lancashire OL10 3PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 360827
Number on roll (school)	255	Fax number	01706 620188
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Fr James Ryan
		Headteacher	Mrs Patricia O'Rourke
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The social and economic circumstances of the area are below average.

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 and St Paul's Roman Catholic is a good school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school well and are supported effectively by the recently established senior management team. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school and they have played a key role in maintaining the school's success over time. The school has continued to improve since its last inspection and provides good value for money. It has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement and this indicates that its capacity to continue to improve is good. Pupils' achievement is good because the quality of teaching is good with particular strengths in Year 6. As a result, standards are above average overall by the end of Year 6. However, standards in writing are not as high as those in other subjects. This has been identified by the leadership team and action has been taken to effect improvements. Already in Years 3 to 6 pupils are making better progress in writing and the gap between reading and writing standards is narrowing. However, standards in writing in Year 2 still remain much lower than those in reading and mathematics. Children enter the Nursery with a broad range of attainment but a significant proportion of children have poor communication and language skills. They have a brisk start at the school because provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good. The curriculum in Year 1 to 6 is effective, overall. Extra-curricular activities and the use of visits and visitors enhance pupils' interest in learning. However, the development of writing skills in other subjects is insufficient. The recent refurbishment of the computer suite is benefiting pupils' learning, though in the classrooms information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, is not as prevalent. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Children enjoy coming to school and they respond well to the good, supportive care they receive. Attendance is good. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning by the time they leave the school is exemplary and this prepares them well for future learning. Systems to check pupils' progress are thorough. This helps staff to plan for the next step of learning and to set pupils targets for improvement. Parents and members of the local community speak highly of the school. For example, a parental remark summed up the feeling of most: 'Our Lady and St Paul's provides a fantastic education. It supports and encourages both its pupils and parents.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their writing skills in other curricular areas.
- Develop teachers' skills in the use of interactive whiteboards to enhance teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement for all is good. Attainment on entry to Nursery is below average. By the end of Reception, standards are broadly average though standards in communication, language and literacy are below average. In Years 1 to 2, pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, and satisfactory progress in writing. Standards, overall, by the end of Year 6 have been significantly above the national average in most years since the last inspection. In the 2006 national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were above average in English, mathematics and science. In English, although standards were overall above average, standards in writing were about average, whereas standards in reading were much higher. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the effective help they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Challenging targets were exceeded in mathematics and almost met in English in the 2006 national tests.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is above average because children enjoy school. They are enthusiastic learners and are polite and courteous. The behaviour and attitudes to learning of the oldest pupils are outstanding. Children support one another in a harmonious community. Bullying rarely occurs and firm action is taken when it does occur. The 'playground friends' help younger children to feel safe and enjoy breaktimes. Pupils are well prepared for future learning because of their good acquisition of basic skills and their increasing maturity. They feel safe, and trust all the adults they deal with. Pupils know how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. For example, they understand the need to exercise regularly and to eat healthy foods.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result, pupils make good progress. The planning of lessons is good and matched to pupils' level of attainment. In the few classes that have interactive whiteboards, teachers use them well to help pupils grasp new learning and consolidate their learning. In most lessons the pace of learning is brisk and pupils are keen to learn. However, in some lessons the pace of learning is slower because pupils spend too long listening to teachers rather than actively practising and developing their skills. Staff are skilled at ensuring pupils behave well. Teaching assistants are deployed well to work with small groups of pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Occasionally when teachers are working with the whole class, teaching assistants are not involved sufficiently in the teaching.

The marking of pupils' work is good. Pupils, particularly in Year 6, have a clear understanding of how well they have done and what they must do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad range of activities meets the interests and needs of all children. A well-planned curriculum develops pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy, and ICT. However, the planning of opportunities to develop and practise writing skills in other subjects is insufficient. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is carefully planned to develop children's skills in all areas of learning. Good use is made of the limited space available outdoors. The needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are met well throughout the school. The curriculum is enriched by a range extra-curricular activities visitors and educational visits, including opportunities to learn Spanish. Pupils' maturity and understanding of healthy lifestyles are developed well through effective emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Child protection procedures are in place. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures promote a safe environment. The tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and is used well to assist pupils to make good progress in their learning. Parents appreciate the care given to their children and like the way the school encourages pupils. Parents commented: 'My child loves to come to school each morning'; 'Children are encouraged to excel'; and 'Staff keep you informed of your child's progress at all times.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides strong leadership which gives a clear sense of direction to drive the school forward. Rigorous analysis of pupils' achievement and self-evaluation result in good knowledge of strengths and areas for improvement. This enables appropriate priorities for future action to be identified and acted upon. A senior leadership team has been established recently to ensure that all aspects of the school's work are monitored. Their monitoring role is at an early stage of development. Teachers accept responsibility for the management of subjects and fulfil their roles effectively. The governing body meets all its statutory regulations. Governors have a strong commitment to the school and some have been governors for several decades. They have maintained strong leadership of the school over time and ensured the school provides a good education for the children in its care.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed the time I spent with you and our discussions. My findings confirm your own views that your school is a good school because the headteacher leads your school well with support from other staff and governors. I was particularly impressed by your outstanding behaviour and interest in learning. Staff look after you well and I was pleased that you get on so well together. The standard of most of your work by the time you leave the school is above average because you are taught well and make good progress. However, I have asked the school to give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in other subjects. You can help by taking as much care with your writing in these subjects as you do in your literacy lessons. I have also asked the school to provide more training for your teachers in the use of interactive whiteboards. You can help by making sure you use them whenever you can. Your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school. I appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn. I trust that you will continue to work with the headteacher and other staff to help them to improve the school. I wish you well for the future.