



Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Leigh

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106502
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287529
Inspection date 13 November 2006
Reporting inspector Michael Onyon

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Windermere Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Leigh
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lancashire WN7 1UX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 674226
Number on roll (school)	309	Fax number	01942 262864
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Audrey Ward
		Headteacher	Mrs Helen Ahmed
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of private and social housing. Around 7% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; of these 12% are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below that in most schools, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds Investors in People accreditation and the Basic Skills award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features, providing good value for money. The strong emphasis given to pupils' personal development and well-being and ensuring that they are all well cared for mean that these aspects are outstanding and better than the school judges. They are positive factors in the good progress pupils make. Staff enable pupils to develop into confident young people who are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This is valued by parents. As one said, 'I moved my children to the school because of its reputation. I have nothing but praise for all the staff; their commitment is amazing.' Relationships are very good; pupils enjoy school and have a real enthusiasm for learning. These strong relationships are also reflected in the outstanding partnerships the school has established within the community.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent. They are able to learn by themselves from an early age and successfully develop this ability as they move through the school. They carry out a range of responsibilities enthusiastically and recognise that their views are taken into account through the work of the school council. There is a strong emphasis given to developing pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles, adopting safe practices, making a positive contribution to the community and developing skills that contribute to their future economic

well-being.

Pupils achieve well and reach standards that are significantly above average by the end of Year 6. Such standards have been reached consistently over the last five years. Children enter the school with levels of attainment below those expected and make good progress in Reception working towards the early learning goals. By the end of Year 2, standards overall and in reading and mathematics are average and pupils make good progress. The school recognises that standards in writing by Year 2 are below average. Standards in writing by Year 6 are not as high as those in reading, mathematics and science.

Teaching is good and lessons are carefully planned and organised, with activities designed to meet the varying needs of pupils in each class. Lessons demonstrate a good pace with a range of interesting activities to engage pupils and promote good learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils are provided for well. Throughout Years 1 to 6 the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language are met well. Because of the school's inclusive ethos, all groups achieve well. Pupils enjoy learning because the curriculum is interesting and varied, enriched by additional activities. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to access learning in other subjects.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher works effectively with the deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, providing a very clear vision for the school, focusing on the inclusion of all. Staff are well motivated and share the commitment to provide the best quality education for the pupils. Governors provide effective support and challenge and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well.

Self-evaluation is good and gives the school an accurate picture of the areas it needs to improve, for example effectively focusing on raising standards in writing across the school. There has been good improvement since the last inspection and the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Offer more opportunities for writing in subjects across the curriculum, so that pupils are able to reach higher standards in writing.
- Improve the use of ICT so that pupils are more competent in using their ICT skills to access learning in subjects across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall achievement is good and standards by Year 6 are above average. In 2006 the national test results dipped to average as the result of a group of lower-attaining pupils joining the school late in Key Stage 2. Pupils made good progress in relation to their starting points. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They enter the school with standards below those expected. Because of good teaching and a well organised curriculum the vast majority are working successfully towards the goals expected of them, doing particularly well in language and mathematical development. As a result of good teaching, pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, overall standards are average. Basic skills in reading and number are strong throughout the school, but weaker in writing. With the exception of writing, standards by Year 6 have been significantly above average in English, mathematics and science over the last five years.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, gifted and talented pupils and pupils learning English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. The school has reached its challenging targets, and because the most able are challenged well, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in Year 6 is above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to learning and the standards achieved. Pupils say of their school, 'Learning is fun and there is always somebody you can turn to if you have worries.' Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with adults and they collaborate very well when working together. They behave extremely well. Older pupils act enthusiastically as play leaders for younger pupils and effectively help them to learn about working together and taking responsibility. The school's work towards Healthy School status gives pupils a very good sense of how to live healthily and to take responsibility for themselves. Older

pupils take responsibility for others, for example raising money for a range of charities and organising events like a tea party for a local over-60s group. They make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community. They enjoy having the opportunity to voice their opinions about the school and take the fact of having a school council seriously, effectively using it as a vehicle for change. Attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good. Overall attendance is average because of poorer attendance by a small group of pupils. The school's receipt of a gold award for work-related skills such as problem solving and enterprise provides a high level of enjoyment to pupils and prepares them exceptionally well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and have a clear structure so that pupils know what they are going to learn, how they will do it and how their success will be measured. Lessons include a good range of activities which keep pupils interested and involved. The best lessons encourage pupils to think independently. For example, in a very good literacy lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the focus was on listening and responding to a story. Pupils took responsibility for their own learning and grew in confidence because of very high expectations, good use of humour and the enjoyment of achieving. Lessons move at a brisk pace. Teachers and support staff get on extremely well with pupils and this motivates pupils to do their best. Pupils are regularly praised for good learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan exciting lessons which interest pupils. Knowledgeable teaching assistants are employed very effectively and their involvement with pupils impacts positively on pupils' learning. Marking is up to date and shows pupils how to improve. Teachers make good use of information from tests to devise the next steps for learning. Not enough opportunities to use ICT are planned by teachers. Opportunities for pupils to write when working in subjects across the curriculum are sometimes missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and matches the needs of pupils well. What is taught in lessons is enriched by the contribution of visitors and the many opportunities for visits that pupils have. For example, during the inspection a visitor related his wartime childhood experiences, engaging pupils and making learning interesting. A residential visit offered to all pupils in Year 6 effectively provides opportunities to learn about safe practices, adopt healthy lifestyles and contribute to their school community. Pupils and parents say how much they appreciate the wide and varied range of extra-curricular activities.

The curriculum is carefully planned and organised and the strong ethos of inclusion helps all the pupils, whatever their needs, to effectively build on their skills and knowledge. This sustains the good progress pupils make. The personal, social and

health education programme offers good opportunities for pupils to learn about responsibilities, about growing up and the dangers of drug abuse. The school is not complacent and is currently looking at its curriculum plan to ensure that key skills are effectively included in planning the teaching of all subjects. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT or to write when working in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Good curricular links with other primary schools and local high schools smooth the transition.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support provided for the pupils is outstanding. Warm, caring relationships help all pupils to feel secure and happy, and support their learning very well. Pupils trust adults and confidently talk to them if they have worries or concerns. The quality of such relationships supports pupils' personal development very well and contributes significantly to their well-being. Procedures for ensuring the suitability of those working in the school are in place, and there are good child protection procedures. Parents and carers find staff approachable and understand how they can support the learning of their children. The work of the learning mentor is particularly effective in supporting pupils' learning. Academic guidance given to pupils is good, helping them to understand their level of learning and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils value the help they are given through their learning targets and the constructive marking of their work. Support for those who are particularly vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are strong.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management impact strongly on the quality of education provided for pupils. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very effectively together and their clear educational vision and commitment to developing staff has created an effective team approach. Self-evaluation is good and the school monitors its progress well, and as a result the school has an accurate picture of its strengths and the areas it needs to improve. For example, the school improvement plan accurately identifies the need to raise standards in writing and to offer opportunities for pupils to access learning in subjects across the curriculum through their use of ICT. The positive action being taken has resulted in improvement with appropriate further steps identified. Governors support the school well: they fulfil their responsibilities effectively and are very involved in the life of the school, carefully monitoring how well the school is doing. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

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?	1

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 very much for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed coming to some of your lessons, and talking to you about your work and the interesting things that you do. I am pleased to tell you that your school provides a good education for you.

What I particularly liked about your school:

- your excellent behaviour and the way that you very willingly take responsibility and help others
- the good results that you achieve by Year 6 and your good achievement
- the good quality of teaching and learning
- your enjoyment of your happy school
- the excellent guidance and support you receive to help you learn.

The adults in your school look after you very well. I have asked your school to help you to reach higher standards in your writing by looking for more opportunities to write in various subjects, and to give you opportunities to use ICT to learn in various subjects.