



Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112366
Local Authority Cumbria
Inspection number 289261
Inspection date 8 March 2007
Reporting inspector David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ostley Bank
School category	Voluntary aided		Newbarns, Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria, LA13 9LR
Age range of pupils	3–11	Telephone number	01229 894624
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01229 894623
Number on roll (school)	241	Chair	Mr John Sloan
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mrs Kate Waplington
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection date 8 March 2007	Inspection number 289261
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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 that serves an area where the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and there are no pupils who learn English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A small number of looked after children attend the school.

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 which gives good value for money. The very strong leadership of the headteacher is well supported by staff and governors and is a significant feature in the promotion of good standards and achievement.

Children enter the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) with standards that usually meet the expectations for their age. They are taught well and make good progress so that by the end of the Foundation Stage standards are generally above expectations. Good achievement and progress continue so that by the end of Year 2 standards are usually above average and significantly above average by the end of Year 6. In the 2006 Year 2 national tests, standards were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. This was because this group was below expectations overall on entry to the Foundation Stage and progress was slower. In the 2006 Year 6 national tests, standards in English and science were significantly above average and above average in mathematics. The school has remedied weaknesses in mathematics and standards are now significantly above average.

Personal development is good. Children settle into the Foundation Stage quickly and make a good start. Pupils feel safe and know about keeping healthy. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to their work. They have lots of opportunities to contribute to the community and are well prepared for their future economic well being. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn about the cultural diversity of British society.

Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are interesting and lively and pupils want to learn. Assessment is used effectively to ensure that pupils are challenged according to their abilities and pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. The marking of work does not consistently provide comments which help pupils to understand how they might improve. The curriculum is good, with very good after school clubs and good links with outside agencies to support learning. It is adapted to meet different learning styles and there is a good focus on literacy and numeracy. Nevertheless, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Care and guidance are good. There is a strong family feel to the school and arrangements for ensuring health and safety and safeguarding children are good. Most parents are very positive about the care provided by the school and there are effective systems for tracking attainment and progress.

Leadership and management are good. Leadership by the headteacher is impressive and all share her high aspirations and commitment to raising standards and improving provision. Governors know the school well and are supportive. Self-evaluation is good and realistic and leads to clear and well informed plans for school improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in literacy and numeracy by using them in other subjects.

- Increase pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity of British society.
- Improve the consistency of marking so that all pupils know clearly what they need to do in order to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with standards that are usually in line with those expected for their ages. They make a good start so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are generally above what would be expected. In the 2006 tests at the end of Year 2, standards in reading were above average and average in mathematics and writing. This represented a dip in standards from previous years, particularly in writing, and was due to this group's below expected attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage. School data and inspection evidence indicate that standards in the current Year 2 are higher. They are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and pupils achieve well and make good progress. In the 2006 tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English and science were significantly above average and above average in mathematics. The lower standards and achievement in mathematics were a consequence of the performance of a minority of pupils who did not achieve as well as expected in some aspects of the subject. This has now been remedied. Inspection evidence and school data indicate that standards in English, mathematics and science in the current Year 6 are well above average and pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children achieve well and make good progress because they are well supported. A significant factor in the good progress and achievement is the culture of high expectation created by the headteacher and by the use of assessment to identify areas of weakness. For example, a close analysis of assessment led to the implementation of strategies which improved boys' achievement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and enjoy school. They understand the important factors in a healthy lifestyle. Relationships are very good and lessons are interesting, which contributes to the school's good attendance. Confidence in learning is enhanced by the high self-esteem pupils develop. They have many opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. They use the 'graffiti walls' to make suggestions about how life in school can be improved. This led to the provision of additional clubs and extra curricular activities. Older pupils are trained as play leaders and pupils raise funds for charities. Spiritual, moral and social development is good and reflects the strong Catholic ethos of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of their own culture but are less clear about cultural diversity in wider British society. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being. This is because there is a strong focus on the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information communication technology (ICT). Pupils collaborate

well with each other and learn about the world of work from the many visitors who come into school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Typically, lessons are interesting and lively so that pupils want to learn. For example, in Reception, understanding of the senses was increased during a science lesson using two-way radios and traffic lights. Teachers have good subject knowledge and this enables them to provide clear explanations and ask challenging questions so that pupils have to think hard and extend their learning. Lessons are usually brisk, keeping pupils on their toes and working hard. Assessment is used well to ensure that work is well suited to different abilities. Teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together so that pupils of all abilities are well supported. Because teachers share lesson targets with pupils and return to these at the end of lessons to check if they have been reached, pupils have a good understanding of their learning. Work is marked regularly and in some instances teachers' comments provide useful advice on how pupils might improve, but this is inconsistent across the school. As a result, there are missed opportunities to extend learning. Pupils behave well and make the most of their lessons because they are managed well and are usually fully engaged in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum contributes effectively to academic progress and personal development. It is broad, balanced and enriched by a wide range of visits and visitors, such as visits from naval personnel or work with felt-makers that extended pupils' learning. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of after school clubs. Older pupils learn German and there are good links with the local secondary school so that the curriculum is extended and the transfer to the next stage of education is usually a smooth one. The curriculum is well adjusted to different learning styles. For example, through:

- the good use of ICT
- the selection of appropriate books and providing the support of role models which has helped to improve boys' achievement.

There is a good focus on basic skills but the school is aware of the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects in order to make work more purposeful and challenging.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school where all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and looked after children are provided with good support. This is enhanced by strong links with outside agencies. There is a very strong family atmosphere and the school works very closely with parents and families. Most parents are pleased by the support and care provided by the school. One parent, reflecting the view of many, commented that, 'this is a wonderful school with very caring staff.' Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place and the school very carefully follows government recommendations for safeguarding children. Assessment and tracking systems have been much improved since the previous inspection. These are now very thorough and enable teachers and pupils to know clearly how well pupils are doing and what they need to do in order to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very strong leadership. Well supported by the deputy headteacher and newly formed senior leadership team, she has a very clear vision for raising standards and improving provision. This is complemented by her high expectations and a determination to provide the best for all pupils. Her commitment is shared with staff so that they work well together as a team to provide a rich curriculum and challenging targets for improvement. This leads to good progress and personal development and a fully inclusive school. Performance is carefully evaluated in order to make improvements and links closely with a school development plan, which is firmly based on its strengths and weaknesses. Governors are supportive. They know the school well and work closely with staff to monitor its performance and help to shape its direction. The budget is managed astutely in order to improve provision and the school makes good use of its accommodation and resources. Subject leaders have a good knowledge of their subjects and are beginning to develop their roles by checking teaching and learning in order to make improvements. Most parents have positive views of the school and have many opportunities to support their children's learning. Issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and combined with careful self-evaluation and a shared commitment to raise quality gives the school a good capacity to improve.

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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	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	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

Holy Family Catholic Primary School

Ostley Bank

Newbarns

Barrow-in-Furness

Cumbria

LA13 9LR

9 March 2007

Dear Children,

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to visit your good school. Everyone was so polite and friendly. You told me that you enjoy coming to school and I was really impressed by the way you all know about the importance of plenty of exercise and a proper diet in keeping healthy. I was pleased to hear that you feel safe and secure and to see that you get on well with each other and the teachers. I think that the play leaders do a good job in helping the younger children and I was impressed by the way you use the 'graffiti wall' to think about Lent and about how you might make the school better.

These are some of the things your school does well:

- your teachers make lessons lively and interesting so that you do well and want to learn
- you get on very well with each other and behave well and have time to say your prayers
- you go on interesting visits and have visitors to help your learning and you really enjoy your after school clubs
- you are well cared for and good checks are made on how your work is coming on
- the school is well led and all the teachers work together to help you to improve.

These are some of the things I think your school could do better and where you can be very helpful.

- I would like you to try and use your English and mathematics more in other subjects to help you to improve your skills.
- When they mark your work I have asked all your teachers to explain more clearly what you need to do in order to improve and you will want to follow their advice.
- I have the school to give you more opportunities to learn about the different ways of life and traditions of people who live in Britain.

Thank you once again for making me so welcome and I must say I thought your felt making was great.

Yours sincerely,

David Earley,

Lead Inspector