



St Catherine's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119585
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291471
Inspection dates 6–7 March 2007
Reporting inspector George Crowther

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moss Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Leyland, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		PR25 4SJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 423767
Number on roll (school)	228	Fax number	01772 457656
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Anthony Burscough
		Headteacher	Mr Christopher Dunne
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 March 2007	291471

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Catherine's is an average sized primary school whose social context is rather more favourable than that of most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment when they start school is broadly average, but varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds, and none are at the early stages of learning English. The headteacher plays a major role in managing the independent Nursery and after school care. The school has Activemark and Eco Schools awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Catherine's is a good school, which has made great strides since its last inspection. The staff encourage a very positive, purposeful approach to learning and school life, which helps all the pupils, whatever their particular talents or needs, to enjoy success. Parents are extremely supportive and view the school as a happy, caring environment in which their children thrive. Based on these firm foundations, pupils make good progress across the school. By Year 6, this leads to well above average academic standards and pupils who are confident, articulate and well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Achievement is good. Children benefit from attending the Nursery that is attached to the school. They get a good start in the Reception class because a range of interesting activities helps them to do well in all aspects of their learning. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Good teaching nurtures and makes best use of pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Basic skills are taught well, which provides a good foundation for the future. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a result, pupils reach well above average standards and, for a number of years, have done well in national tests. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Occasionally, however, whole-class sessions last too long and so pupils are not involved actively enough in their learning. Where teachers organise a range of independent tasks, they do not always check carefully enough that pupils are making good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good with outstanding features. They enjoy all aspects of school life, are very keen to learn and their behaviour is exemplary. Staff have high expectations of conduct and the pupils respond admirably. The only thing Year 6 pupils say they do not like about school is that they are going to have to leave. The pupils know a lot about being healthy because it has a high profile in school: they feel safe and cared for. Through carrying out extra responsibilities, pupils make a significant contribution to the school community. Pupils are thoughtful about the wider community, for example, organising their own talent show to raise funds for charity. The curriculum is good because it promotes pupils' learning and enjoyment well through interesting lessons and a rich range of clubs and activities.

Good leadership and management have enabled the school to improve pupils' achievement since the last inspection. The headteacher and staff are very enthusiastic about making further improvements. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness but, because they cannot always explain the reasons for strengths and weaknesses, the school improvement plan lacks clarity. A track record of raising standards gives the school a good capacity to make further improvements. It provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of good or better teaching and learning to ensure that pupils learn quickly all the time.

- Sharpen school improvement planning so that it builds on a thorough understanding the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with average attainment and, by Year 6, have done well to reach well above average standards. They make good progress in the Reception class. A well planned variety of activities captures their interest and the staff support learning effectively. By the time pupils join Year 1, standards are usually slightly above national expectations. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 1 and 2, responding to good teaching and building their basic skills well. Teachers make lessons fun, which contributes greatly to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Current standards in Year 2 are above average, but results in national tests have varied from average to well above average depending on the ability of each group of pupils. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is good and particularly strong in Years 5 and 6 where the teachers' very positive rapport with the pupils, leads to rapid progress. There are weaknesses, however, in aspects of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported, which enables them to be fully involved in all lessons and to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils thoroughly enjoy school and, by Year 6, have a very mature and positive attitude to learning. A typical comment was, 'I like all the lessons because they're fun and not boring'. This is reflected in the enthusiastic way pupils contribute to lessons and work hard on their tasks. Pupils are friendly, polite and exceptionally well behaved. They say everyone gets on well together, and this was clear in lessons and at playtimes. The 'Reception Guardian Angels' take great pride in looking after their Nursery partners. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The day-to-day life of the school, and the curriculum, encourage pupils' understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. Pupils have a good grasp of their own well-being. They know that eating the right things and exercise are important for good health. They feel safe in school and they know how to stay safe out of school.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school community, for example, in the efficient way prefects shepherd younger pupils as they move around school. They respond well to the encouragement they are given to take on extra responsibilities. The school council gives pupils a valuable voice in school matters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching in most lessons helps pupils learn quickly. All the staff have a good rapport with the pupils, which supports learning well. Pupils enjoy teachers' good humour, but they know they are in lessons to learn, so they remain sensible. Lessons are purposeful because teachers make sure pupils know what they are aiming to learn. Tasks are usually well matched to pupils' needs, helping them to learn quickly. The best teaching uses a range of methods to capture and hold pupils' interest, as seen when Year 6 were learning to write letters in various styles. Occasionally, the introduction to a lesson lasts too long, so pupils spend too much time listening and their interest wanes. Where a lot of different tasks are happening at the same time, teachers do not always ensure all the pupils are making good progress. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. Increasingly, these are being used well to identify and support pupils who are not doing as well as they could. Pupils have learning targets, but the use of these is inconsistent across the school. The needs of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities are assessed carefully. Precise learning targets help them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum, with a wide range of additional activities, meets pupils' needs effectively. Particularly good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities helps them to be confident in their learning and achieve well. Since the last inspection, good progress has been made in strengthening aspects of the curriculum. For example, provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is much better and standards are higher. The school is still working on strengthening the links between subjects that would make the curriculum more creative and relevant. Pupils' very good personal development owes much to the school's good and improving programme of personal, social and health education. A good range of musical and sporting activities outside lessons, as well as visits and residential experiences, is much enjoyed by the pupils and supports their achievement in many areas. For example, pupils in Year 1 spoke enthusiastically about their visit to a local museum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with outstanding features. The level of care and education is enhanced greatly by a Nursery and after school club. Highly positive relationships combined with a caring philosophy ensure that each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. Staff skilfully develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem so pupils feel comfortable to ask for help and support. Parents greatly appreciate all these

strengths and say staff are very approachable if there are any concerns. Pupils with learning difficulties, and the small number with physical disabilities, are very well supported and fully integrated into school life. Links with external agencies support these pupils well. Staff rigorously implement the good procedures for safeguarding pupils from harm. Support for pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and improving. In lessons, teachers often provide good guidance about how pupils can improve. More formal systems for ensuring pupils know the next step in their learning, including teachers' marking, are not always good enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a strong leader whose clear view for the development of the school has led to significant improvements in recent years. Not only have the standards of pupils' work risen, but initiatives such as extending the work of the school through a Nursery and out of school care have been successful. Governors share fully in this vision and are extremely supportive of the school's development. The headteacher is well supported by senior leaders and other staff who play an important part in management tasks. Leaders have good systems for checking on the school's performance by tracking pupils' progress and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders play a significant role in gathering these data. Whilst leaders have an accurate overview of the effectiveness of the school, they cannot always explain the reasons for strengths and weaknesses which would hold the key to identifying priorities for improvement. As a result, aspects of the school improvement plan are not sufficiently focused. Governors have a perceptive view of the school's strengths and areas for development and are not afraid to ask challenging questions of management. Parents' opinions of the school are extremely positive. They see the school as a vital part of the community and greatly appreciate the progress their children are making both academically and in their personal skills.

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	1
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

St Catherine's RC Primary School

Moss Lane

Leyland

Lancashire

PR25 4SJ

8 March 2007

Dear Children

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we visited your school to find out how well you are doing. There are lots of good things about your school, but we also found a few ways in which it could be even better. The strengths we found are:

- it's a delight to be in your school because everyone is so friendly and polite
- you get on well with your work in lessons and you are making good progress
- everyone gets on well together and the older children look after the younger ones
- you behave extremely well in lessons and around the school
- special jobs for the older pupils are an enjoyable way of helping everyone in school
- you know a good deal about being healthy and staying safe
- Year 6 children reach well above average standards
- the teachers do a good job in making lessons interesting and helping you to learn
- you enjoy and take part in the wide range of clubs and activities outside lessons
- you appreciate the way in which your teachers and the other staff care for you
- your headteacher and all the staff do a good job in helping your school to improve.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- In a few lessons, we found that some of you did not make enough progress. We have asked your teachers to make sure the activities in lessons and the work they give you help you to learn quickly. You must try your best, as well.
- Your teachers check carefully on how you are doing with your work to find ways you can learn more rapidly. We want them to think very carefully about what you need to do to improve.

Thank you for helping me with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead Inspector