



St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119598
Local Authority Blackpool
Inspection number 291474
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Glastonbury Avenue
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackpool, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	3–11		FY1 6RD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 311248
Number on roll (school)	432	Fax number	01253 312098
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Miguel Gomez
		Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Worden
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school in the south of Blackpool draws pupils from a wide area. The school benefits from a stable pupil population. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is lower than average and so is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. A small number of pupils speak English in addition to their home language, and a few are at an early stage of learning English. There is a small number of pupils in the care of the local authority. Most children start school with broadly average attainment. In recent years, there has been a high staff turnover. This is now resolved. The headteacher was absent from school during the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and gives satisfactory value for money. The inspection confirms the school's view. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in some respects is weak. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

In recent years the school has had difficulties recruiting and retaining suitable staff. The situation has improved and with better staff stability, the school is ready to move forward. It has satisfactory capacity to improve.

Standards are broadly average throughout the school and achievement is satisfactory. In reading and writing, standards have gradually improved in recent years. This is due to the rigorous implementation of initiatives, including better teaching and learning strategies alongside good external support from the local authority. Standards in mathematics are broadly average, but more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should and do not reach the higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and children in the care of the local authority make satisfactory progress because they are supported well. The school provides carefully planned language activities for the small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, and their progress is satisfactory.

Most parents have positive views of the school. A typical comment is, 'My child is very happy and enjoys learning.' The school works to ensure that all pupils feel welcome and want to learn. Pupils' progress in their personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy school and say, 'It's good fun, we learn a lot every day'. They understand how to be healthy, and eagerly participate in the many sporting and physical activities the school provides. They behave well, clearly feel safe, and say they can approach any of the staff if they have a problem. The anti-bullying week has provided them with good strategies to deal with any bullying or unfriendly behaviour. Pupils are keen to seek election as school councillors, and enjoy participating in local festivals. Attendance is satisfactory.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, and children start school happily in the welcoming environment and make adequate progress. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, resulting in pupils' satisfactory progress, but lesson plans do not always provide activities for the wide range of abilities. The curriculum places a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The school cares for pupils' welfare effectively, but assessment procedures are not fully developed so that work is not always matched accurately to all pupils' varying needs.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory overall, but procedures to evaluate how well the school is performing are inadequate. Plans for improvement are cumbersome and lack clear focus in the most vital areas for development. Leadership responsibilities, including identification of those who are responsible for evaluating progress, are not clearly defined. Issues from the previous

inspection have been addressed satisfactorily. Standards in reading have improved and a programme to check the quality of teaching implemented.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in mathematics, especially for more able pupils.
- Improve assessment procedures and use the information to ensure all pupils achieve to the best of their ability.
- Clarify leadership roles and make sure that areas for improvement are clearly identified and acted on.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. When children start school, their attainment is broadly in line with that expected for children of nursery age. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach the early learning goals for their age by the end of the Reception Year. The best progress is made in personal and social development, so pupils are enthusiastic, keen to learn and respond very well to classroom routines.

Throughout the school, pupils attain standards that are broadly average and their achievement is satisfactory overall. The 2005 national tests and 2006 school data for Key Stage 2 show improvement on previous years, particularly in English, but pupils missed the targets set in mathematics. Test results in Key Stage 1 in all subjects improved in 2006, especially in writing.

Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school in English, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, those with English as an additional language and children in the care of the local authority. Progress is satisfactory overall in mathematics, but is inconsistent across the school. This is because assessment information about what pupils know and can do has not been used efficiently to inform the setting of targets for pupils; consequently, there is some underachievement, particularly among more capable pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Parents are particularly pleased with this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are friendly and well behaved. They adapt well to the changes in the school's organisation, particularly during the festive season. Almost all have positive attitudes to their work and show enjoyment in their learning. Attendance is satisfactory. The school works regularly with the small number of families who need help to improve the attendance of their children. The school community is supportive and welcoming. Pupils value their friends and say that they feel safe and secure in school, because they are helped by positive relationships with staff. Pupils say, 'Some people have arguments and try to bully, but teachers always sort it out'.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the choices they need to make to live safe and healthy lives. They are enthusiastic about their involvement in the school's sporting opportunities.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They receive good support from their faith community and clearly know right from wrong. They develop an awareness of democracy and make their views known through the elected school council. They have been helping to design improvements to their playground and look forward, with excitement, to the final results. Pupils show their concern for others less fortunate than themselves, by engaging in fund raising for local and world-wide communities.

Their future well-being is satisfactorily supported by their ability to work in groups, by their appreciation of the views of others and by the sound grasp of basic skills. Although the school provides opportunities for pupils to lead class worship and research some aspects of their work, chances to exercise their leadership skills or to use their initiative are not frequent enough.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in the Nursery is satisfactory. It provides a suitable range of practical activities that has a positive impact on children's learning, but the pace of their progress is not always brisk enough. Teaching in the Reception Year is often good because the activities are well prepared and well resourced. Children learn well in small groups when directed by adults, however not all pupils gain enough from independent activities that do not have direct involvement from adults.

In infant and junior classes, lessons feature carefully prepared resources and effective systems to manage behaviour. Good relationships encourage pupils to share their ideas confidently. In good lessons, effective planning, with a clear focus on what pupils are intended to learn, ensures that they make good progress. In other lessons, however, the planning for learning is too general. Tasks do not always match or challenge closely enough the broad range of pupils' needs to ensure that every pupil makes the good progress needed to raise standards further. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities benefit from clear arrangements for planning and checking their learning, and are often well supported by the teaching assistants in lessons. Consequently, they work steadily towards their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. The school makes the expected provision for all subjects and other activities suitable for primary pupils, including visits to places of interest, residential experiences and opportunities for sport. Literacy and numeracy lessons

have a high priority in the timetable. Pupils' personal development needs are well considered and this is seen in the successful outcomes. The Foundation Stage curriculum has improved due to the increased emphasis on developing outdoor play. The provision ensures that pupils enjoy school and develop their personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff take good care of pupils' welfare, and have developed supportive relationships that encourage pupils to learn. Robust procedures ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, children in the care of the local authority and those at an early stage of learning English are effectively supported in lessons and in small groups. Throughout the school, all pupils are guided well towards developing their personal skills and behaviour.

The guidance to support pupils' academic progress is not fully developed. It is adequate in order to help the school identify pupils who need additional support. However, procedures for gathering assessment information are not rigorous enough and are not helpful to teachers when planning lessons. As a result, the pace of progress is not always fast enough, especially for the most capable pupils. This is also the weakest area of the Foundation Stage provision where systems for planning and assessing pupils' progress are not consistent across both year groups. The most effective guidance for improvement is provided by staff during discussions with pupils in lessons, and through helpful comments in the marking of their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is currently being led by the deputy headteacher. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors satisfactorily ensure that the school carries out all statutory duties. The school has assessed its effectiveness accurately and identified appropriate areas for improvement. Actions have made some impact. For example, the system for monitoring the quality of teaching, supported by professional development and performance management, has contributed to the rise in English standards.

Plans for improvement are complex and some of them lack a clear focus on what actually needs to be done. The school improvement planning is also unclear as to how the school will measure the success of what they change or who has responsibility for implementing the various areas for improvement.

The strong emphasis on the personal development and well-being of pupils is effectively developed through the school's caring ethos, and parents appreciate this. Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted. The school is well maintained, staffed and resourced, especially for information and communication technology, and staff use the interactive whiteboards effectively in lessons to motivate pupils to learn.

Consequently, pupils' attain satisfactory standards and skills. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory and the school provides adequate 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	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	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	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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?	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	4
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

St John Vianney's Catholic Primary School

Glastonbury Avenue

Blackpool

Lancashire

FY1 6RD

14 December 2006

Dear Children

You may remember that three inspectors visited your school recently. You had all been to the theatre to see the pantomime 'Dick Whittington' and we could tell how much you had enjoyed it. It was good to see Year 5 dressed as Victorian children and Year 6 dressed up for their 'Beatles' day.

We would like to thank you for helping us during our visit and to tell you some of the things we found.

You enjoy school and behave well. Everyone is polite and friendly, and you are sensible members of your school community. The staff make sure that you are safe at school, and you told us that you know what to do if anyone is unfriendly or unkind to you.

We have asked the staff to do some things to help make your school better. They are going to help you make faster progress in mathematics, and to make sure more of you reach high levels in your tests. You in turn must work extra hard and concentrate well in lessons. They are going to make sure they plan work that is suitable for everyone in each class and gives you all plenty to think about. You can help here by doing your very best every day and working as quickly and as accurately as you can. Your headteacher and the governors are going to check how well the school is getting on with the improvement plans. You need to be ready for changes that may take place and you need to help out by always being sensible when new things happen in your school.

We are sure you will continue to behave well and help each other as you do now.

Once again, thank you for all your help and for being so friendly,

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur (Mrs) Lead Inspector