



The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119621
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291484
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
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	Balmoral Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Lancaster, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		LA1 3BT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01524 64686
Number on roll (school)	126	Fax number	01524 34667
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Michael Banks
		Headteacher	Miss Anne Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006	Inspection number 291484
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in the centre of Lancaster. Socio-economic circumstances locally are broadly average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There are small numbers of children from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom learn English as an additional language. There are fewer children than average identified with learning difficulties and disabilities.

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 and improving school which gives good value for money. The headteacher's excellent leadership and extremely clear vision for raising standards and improving provision are well supported by staff and governors.

Children's attainment at entry to the Foundation stage is typical for their age. Satisfactory provision has led to expected levels of attainment by the end of Reception. In the 2005 national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 standards were significantly above average. Although the numbers of Year 6 pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English and mathematics increased in 2006, results overall were lower, particularly in writing. These results were affected by the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils currently make good progress overall, although progress in writing is satisfactory. Teachers work closely with teaching assistants, particularly in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, so that all pupils make good progress and achieve well. This is enhanced by the school's good links with outside agencies.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as are spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong and the school's very strong Christian ethos permeates every aspect of the school. Pupils know how to lead healthy lifestyles and feel safe and secure. Relationships are very good and pupils enjoy coming to school. They have a good understanding of how to accept responsibility, and help others in many different ways in the school, parish and wider community. The school effectively promotes collaborative skills and pupils are confident to work independently, preparing them well for the world of work. Attendance has improved to average levels.

The curriculum is good. There are many opportunities for enrichment through visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' improving progress and good personal development. There is a clear focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to extend these skills in other subjects. Good and sometimes excellent teaching and learning complement the good curriculum. Care, guidance and support are good. Required procedures for safeguarding children are in place and carefully followed.

Leadership and management are good. The school is further developing its effective methods to monitor pupils' progress in order to set more precise targets for improvement. Cautious self-evaluation leads to a comprehensive long term plan for improvement. This is helping to improve standards and achievement.

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise standards in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation Stage with average levels of attainment. In previous years, satisfactory teaching has generally led to satisfactory progress so attainment is as expected by the time they enter Year 1. However, because the teaching in the Foundation stage is now good, the progress of children currently in the school is also good. In the 2005 Year 2 tests, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were significantly above average, but the 2006 tests results were lower, particularly in writing. Year 6 standards in 2005 were significantly above average in English and mathematics, and very high in science. Although the numbers of Year 6 pupils reaching the higher level 5 in English and mathematics increased in 2006, results overall were lower, particularly in writing. The 2006 results were affected by high proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who were at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. From school data, all groups in the current Years 2 and 6 make good progress overall and are on track to achieve well in national tests. This improving progress is a result of good teaching and the effective way in which the school quickly addresses any weaknesses.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and enjoy coming to school. This is because relationships are very good and lessons are usually interesting. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and taking exercise in leading a healthy life style, resulting in the school's achievement of the Healthy School Award. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good and this clearly reflects the strong Catholic Christian ethos of the school. Staff provide good role models and pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong, supporting their good behaviour. Pupils contribute in many ways to the school and wider community, including as members of the active School Council. Older pupils and the head boy and girl and their deputies act very responsibly in helping others at break times and around school. The school plays a full part in the life of the parish and the local community and pupils hold fund raising events to help charities. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes excellent. Lessons are typically lively and interesting so that pupils are eager to learn. For example, in the Reception class children were enthralled by the workings of the function machine that deepened their understanding of number. Occasionally, pupils' attention wanes when they sit listening to the teacher for too long. Teachers have high expectations, illustrated by an excellent lesson in Year 6. Pupils learned journalistic interview techniques very well because they were challenged to devise open and closed questions and collaborate in role play. Teachers work very closely with teaching assistants, particularly in support of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This helps these groups to make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge, giving clear explanations and asking challenging questions. Work is planned carefully and teachers make effective use of assessment data so that they and their pupils know what must be done to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is broad and well balanced and enriched by a range of visits out of school, visitors to school, and after-school clubs. A residential visit helps older pupils develop a number of key skills in history, geography and in their personal development. The curriculum is well planned and adjusted to pupils' differing needs and aptitudes so that they are challenged and interested and want to learn. There is a close focus on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise and extend their core skills in other subjects. The school has good links with the local secondary school, facilitating the teaching of French and sport and ensuring a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Some aspects of care are excellent. All pupils and their families are well known and each pupil is highly valued. The 'Pyramid Club' and 'Nurture Group' help to increase identified pupils' self esteem and confidence. The school provides a very good level of support for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they make good progress. The school is particularly successful in supporting pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, most of whom are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. This enables them to feel welcome and secure so that they make good progress. Requirements for safeguarding children are carefully followed and child protection and risk assessment are in place. Parents are confident to approach the school should

they have any concerns. There are effective systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress. The school is further developing these systems in order to focus more consistently on targets for improvement for groups and individuals.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership, vision and dedication are exemplary. A parent commented, 'The headteacher is very strong and gets things done.' She is well supported by the senior management team and other staff in a determined approach to raise standards by providing an extremely caring and inclusive community, underpinned by Christian values. This leads to good and improving achievement and good personal development. Subject co-ordinators are further developing their skills in checking teaching and learning in order to make further improvements. Cautious self-evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses is closely linked to the school development plan. Governors are supportive and because they know the school well they hold it to account for its performance. Key issues from the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the budget is astutely managed to support improved provision and to help to raise standards. The school has good capacity to continue 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	3
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	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	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

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Balmoral Road

Lancaster

Lancashire

LA1 3BT

11 December 2006

Dear Children

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. Thank you for making me so welcome. I was pleased to see that you know about keeping fit and healthy and that you are very polite and courteous. I was very impressed by the way in which you talked confidently about your school because this helped me with the inspection. For example, I learned that you feel safe and secure in school, that teachers are very friendly and give you interesting things to do so that you work hard and enjoy coming to school.

These are some of the things that your school does well:

- your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting so that you make good progress
- all of you are really helpful to those children who are learning English as a second language
- the school looks after you extremely well and makes sure that each one of you is important
- the school is like a big family which tries hard to follow Christian teaching
- the headteacher leads the school extremely well and teachers and governors work very hard to improve the school.

Here are some of the things that I think could be better. Teachers could:

- work with you to improve your writing
- help you to use your English and mathematics in the other subjects in order to improve your skills.

Thank you again for your kind welcome.

Yours sincerely

David Earley

Lead Inspector