



St John's Catholic Primary School, Poulton-le-Fylde

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119631
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291487
Inspection dates 18–19 January 2007
Reporting inspector Heather Evans

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Breck Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		FY6 7HT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 883690
Number on roll (school)	209	Fax number	01253 883645
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Jonathan Brown
		Headteacher	Mrs Brigid Gildert
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is at the heart of the parish community. Almost all of the pupils are White British and, although a few are bilingual, everyone speaks English confidently. Very few claim an entitlement to free school meals. The overall percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although there is an above average proportion with statements of special educational need. On entry to the Reception class, children's attainment varies but for most it is close to that expected for children of the same age nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents and pupils speak highly of the school's success in meeting their aspirations and expectations. Outstanding teaching, care, support and guidance contribute towards pupils' excellent achievement and consistently high standards. Their academic achievement and excellent personal skills ensure that they are very well prepared for their futures. They are confident young people who demonstrate mature social skills and take good care of one another. They show responsibility towards the wider community by raising funds for local and national charities. They have a deep understanding of how to plan for a healthy lifestyle. A stimulating and imaginative curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and personal development. Art, music, role-play and poetry are woven into the life of the school and help to make learning exciting.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding: imaginative teaching enables children to make rapid progress. This fast rate of progress is sustained throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 because of the consistently high quality of teaching. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average. In Year 6, standards are exceptionally high in mathematics and science and well above average in English. Work to enhance enjoyment and purpose in reading and writing is particularly well planned in all subjects. The drive to support pupils in applying their writing skills in a range of experiences through the 'Big Writing Project' is proving to be very successful. The expectation of success and high academic achievement, especially in Years 5 and 6, creates a zest for learning that enthuses the whole school. One parent said, 'I do not remember any of my children's test scores but I do know very well the rich quality of life and self-worth that the school has given to them all'.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide excellent leadership. Their clear vision for the school and its development is shared by governors and staff and based on high aspirations and expectations of pupils and staff. Senior and middle leaders share responsibility for leading improvements extremely well. A very skilled and knowledgeable governing body contribute to shared leadership. The strengths described during the previous inspection have been improved upon. Teaching has improved further and high standards have been maintained. Very effective self-evaluation means that staff have an accurate view of what works well and where there are openings for new initiatives. The school is constantly reviewing practice and there is no hint of complacency. There is outstanding capacity to drive through shared high ambitions.

What the school should do to improve further

- This outstanding school has no important areas for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and is, in part, the result of exciting and skilled teaching throughout the school. Standards have been significantly above national averages for many years. From a broadly average level of attainment on entry, pupils make very good progress and reach expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage and above average standards by the end of Year 2. National test results in 2005 and 2006 for Year 2 pupils were well above average in reading and mathematics and above average in writing.

Pupils make equally rapid progress throughout Key Stage 2. Year 6 national test results in 2005 and 2006 were very high in science and mathematics and well above average in English. Early indications are that the school's work on improving the quality of writing within all subjects across the school is proving to be successful. This is especially the case for many boys who had previously been reluctant to engage in extended writing activities. The school achieved its ambitious targets for attainment at Key Stage 2 in 2006. The standards of pupils' current work and the school's analysis of pupils' progress indicate that the school is on course to achieve ambitious targets.

Well-targeted support and adapted teaching approaches enable the lower ability pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make as much progress as their peers. Higher achieving pupils do particularly well in mathematics and science. Boys and girls achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the rate of attendance is above average. They arrive early to share in early morning activity sessions. They have very positive attitudes to learning and think the rich range of activities provided are interesting and fun. They say that there is no bullying. From their earliest days, pupils are very confident, eager and independent learners. Excellent relationships, leading to mutual trust and confidence, reflect the school's very positive Catholic ethos. The school council plays an important role in the everyday life of the school and gives its members good experience of accepting responsibility and decision-making. Pupils contribute to the smooth running of the school, acting as buddies to younger children at playtime or helping to add joy to collective worship through their singing and dancing. They know how to keep safe and choose to follow a healthy lifestyle. Pupils who help out at lunchtimes are proud to wear special 'salad server' uniforms in recognition of their achievement of national awards for food hygiene.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils display a strong understanding of right and wrong. They respect the different beliefs and values of others and show a good awareness of the community in which they live. They write tellingly of other cultures and traditions. Pupils gain excellent personal and

academic skills that will be valuable to them in the next phase of their education and in adult life and work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding throughout the school. Sensitive and stimulating teaching enables pupils to make very good and often outstanding progress. Work is very challenging and the expectation of success permeates the life of the school. Pupils' progress is tracked meticulously. This information is used very effectively by teachers in their detailed planning to match work to individual needs and prior attainment. Teachers are very knowledgeable and have considerable understanding of the subjects they teach. Tasks in lessons are exciting, relevant to pupils' interests and enable learning to be rapid and enjoyable. Teachers successfully incorporate exciting opportunities for writing into other subjects. The desire to 'light a fire for learning' rather than trying to 'fill empty buckets' embodies the life of the school.

Pupils find their clear learning targets and the advice they receive when their work is marked very helpful. Even the youngest children are aware of what they need to do to improve. Staff are highly committed to and succeed in developing the learning skills of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. The broad range of work enlivens pupils' achievement and enables high standards to be achieved. Opportunities for investigations and other practical learning experiences are considered vital, alongside very good provision for learning basic skills. Pupils enjoy carrying out environmental work in the very secret garden. The singing and physical activities that begin each day encourage a positive start to learning. Teachers make learning interesting and enjoyable for everyone by making relevant links between subjects. Pupils' understanding of and respect for others is well developed through the study of the faiths, cultures and traditions of people from other countries. The vast range of enrichment activities includes sporting, creative and residential experiences. Pupils work with talented artists, actors and musicians, sharing in many cultural experiences. Pupils learn to work independently of teachers working on their personal projects, which include writing journals about life in Tudor England or the life of an evacuee. The 'Blue Sky' thinking group expands horizons for gifted and talented pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. The school's ethos is calm and supportive. Pupils feel safe in school and they explain how they have been

encouraged to form trusting relationships. Pupils feel they are listened to and are given time to discuss problems with adults. The school works very successfully with outside agencies and parents to ensure that pupils' needs are met, especially those of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils are supported superbly by very skilled teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' progress is monitored very closely so that possible underachievement is avoided. A whole range of imaginative means of support and guidance helps to keep pupils on track in their learning. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and risk assessments are carried out rigorously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is highly committed to the school and the wider community. As a result of her outstanding leadership, expectations and aspirations are high. Her vision of how the school can build on its excellent reputation is supported by her deputy and is shared by all staff. Teachers and governors know the school's strengths very well. They strive to maintain the established high standards whilst promoting the development of the whole child in sporting, creative and reflective ways. The school has gained national and local awards for high achievement, and creative and sporting attributes. Pupils are the first in England to gain awards for safe food handling, reflecting their knowledge and understanding about promoting an awareness of food hygiene and healthy living.

The established pattern of shared leadership helps staff to manage their responsibilities very well. Staff training is exemplary and the skills of all adults are used to the maximum benefit of pupils' education. The rigorous programme of monitoring and self-evaluation of the school's work has led to improved academic performance year on year.

The school provides excellent value for money. Finances are well managed. The apparent monetary surplus is earmarked for the school's share of building improvements. Skilled and experienced governors hold the school to account for its work. They review and evaluate the work of the school regularly and have a very clear view of why initiatives are successful. They rejoice in what the headteacher and the staff have achieved over time and, with their help and support, the school is exceptionally well placed 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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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's Catholic Primary School

Breck Road

Poulton-le-Fylde

Lancashire

FY6 7HT

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for your help when we visited your school. You are fortunate to attend such an excellent and friendly school where you learn and work together so very well.

Whatever class you are in, you learn extremely well because of the way teachers make your activities so exciting. Your work in English, mathematics, science and ICT is very good. Your school is helping you all to improve further by writing in different ways about many exciting subjects. The work in your books is very neat and you told us that messy work is not accepted by anyone. Your school has had a good reputation for many years and you work hard to keep this up. In every class, you are doing just that and always with a song and a smile. You all know what you need to do to make the best possible progress, working together towards the very highest standards. Teachers care for you extremely well and organise exciting visits which welcome many interesting people to share in what you do in school. You can be especially proud of the certificates for safe food handling awarded to those of you who help out at lunchtimes: the 'salad servers'.

You come to school every day except when you are ill. Your superb behaviour helps you to have fun in lessons and complete lots of work. You manage difficult tasks very well by helping one another.

Your plans to aim for the top 'Artsmark' award and to do more environmental work in the 'secret garden' are interesting and exciting. We all hope you can find ways to make them happen so that together you can build on the success of the school in all that you do.

Yours sincerely

Heather Evans

(Lead inspector)