



St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chipping

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119643
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291488
Inspection date 3 October 2006
Reporting inspector Gordon Alston

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Club Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Chipping, Preston
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, PR3 2QH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01995 61367
Number on roll (school)	36	Fax number	01995 61367
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Hall
		Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Smith
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
4–11	3 October 2006	291488

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Each of the two classes in this very small school provides for more than one age group. It serves a rural, farming area with little social and economic deprivation. Attainment on entry to the school varies because of significant differences from year to year in the small numbers entering Reception. All learners are from White British backgrounds. No pupil receives a free school meal. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspection confirms the school's judgement that its effectiveness is good and that it provides good value for money. Parents and pupils strongly support this view. One parent wrote, 'St. Mary's made an unhappy child very happy. My child has learning difficulties but they still help him achieve well. They are always looking for new approaches to learning. A wonderful school!' Personal development is outstanding; pupils of all ages mix and play very happily together in a safe and secure environment.

Through school community meetings, organised by pupils themselves, important suggestions relating to a healthy school dinner menu each term are telephoned to the local café. Having assessed options for a school pet, they have decided on tropical fish after debating health and safety issues and suitability. Great emphasis is placed on providing meaningful learning experiences that not only interest pupils but also prepare them well for the 21st century. As a result, pupils make good progress in their learning; they feel confident and willingly try new approaches to learning. For example, they make video recordings of their story telling and participate in on-line discussions. Pupils behave very well and show excellent attitudes to school and work. They thoroughly enjoy their time in school and all benefit equally from what the school offers. They remain calm, work very enthusiastically and recognise the benefits of a healthy lifestyle. Within this outstanding personal development, pupils have a satisfactory but limited awareness of multi-cultural issues.

Leadership and management are good and central to the school's innovative approach. Ideas such as the 'Fair Trade project' encourage pupils to manage a small business enterprise. They also run an internet site for parents and pupils to communicate with school; these are two innovative developments. All pupils are provided with their own laptop giving them many opportunities to use their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to aid their learning. The clear vision of an enthusiastic headteacher promotes good academic and personal development.

Achievement is good because teaching and learning are effective. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress in all areas of learning and reach the standards expected of them. By the end of Year 2, standards are average, indicating pupils have progressed well on the basis of their prior attainment. They continue to achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. The school has recently put in place initiatives focusing on further improving pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills. The well-planned, project-based curriculum effectively broadens learners' experiences and community involvement whilst extending their literacy and numeracy skills.

The quality of care is strong and the school has good procedures to monitor learners' achievements. The excellent links with parents, the local community and outside agencies provide very good support for learners. The school has developed well since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further. Governors support the school very well and know its strengths.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills.
- Provide wider experiences to make pupils more aware of life in a multi-cultural society.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are high. Because numbers are so small and attainment on entry changes significantly from year to year, comparisons of trends and results at the end of Years 2 and 6 are not reliable guides to whole-school performance. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception fluctuates around average. With good teaching they progress well, and reach expected standards in language and number. This good progress continues through Years 1 to 6 and, currently, standards are average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. Challenging targets are met in national tests, but the school is focusing on further raising pupils' reading, speaking and listening skills. The school has a number of strategies for improvement in place, such as making video recordings of pupils' story telling. No group is significantly underachieving. The more able pupils are sufficiently challenged, whilst pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive effective support. Boys and girls do equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Children learn to respect and understand their own feelings and those of others. Relationships in the school are excellent and pupils are extremely polite, friendly and courteous. Their excellent behaviour and attitudes to work create a happy, productive and enjoyable learning environment. Attendance is very high. 'School Community' meetings involve pupils in making decisions, such as planning improvements to the 'Trim Trail'. All pupils show great initiative in lessons because teachers provide many opportunities for them to develop confidence and to take responsibility for their own learning. They successfully adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and know the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good; they understand the importance of rules and good order, and support each other well. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of living in a multi-cultural society. Their excellent grounding in social and basic skills prepares them well for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. A particularly strong feature is the good tracking and analysis of learners' needs which guide teachers' planning. As a result, the work provided is well suited to the needs of all abilities. Teachers expect and ensure that pupils work hard and learn at a brisk rate so that they progress well. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well supported by all staff. Conscientious teaching assistants play an important role in this. Excellent relationships promote learners' willingness to try hard. Teachers' classroom management is very good and pupils display excellent behaviour and attitudes to work. They are encouraged to work independently, and also cooperatively, often with pupils from other year groups. Well-marked work helps pupils know what to do next to improve. Challenging literacy and numeracy targets have made pupils and teachers aware of what individuals should try to achieve, thereby raising expectations and the quality of teaching and learning. At times, because of the wide age and ability range, teachers do not always intervene with pupils to enable further challenge as they work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Clear links and strong emphases across subjects successfully promote enjoyment in learning and good achievement. The personal development of learners is well supported, particularly through sport, exercise, drama and technology. A good range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors enriches the curriculum. National guidelines are successfully adapted to meet the needs of all children equally, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective use is made of learners' literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects and opportunities to develop their ICT skills are very good. The Foundation Stage curriculum is firmly based on learning through activity. Pupils accept responsibilities maturely, helping them to become young citizens who are involved in how their community is run. Pupils have limited experiences to help them be fully aware of life in a multi-cultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good; staff know pupils well and are fully committed to their welfare. The very caring learning environment helps eliminate bullying and the school works very closely with external agencies and parents. Child protection procedures are in place, and health and safety arrangements are effective. The excellent relationships between adults and pupils enable pupils to feel safe, and to be confident that they have someone to confide in if they are worried. Because the school is successful in enabling pupils to understand the importance of good health, their awareness of the benefits of healthy eating and regular exercise is very good. The

school tracks learners' progress well, particularly in junior classes, in English and mathematics, and carefully monitors their personal development. Well-planned induction procedures smooth children's start in Reception and very good links with the local high school ease learners' transition there.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Self-evaluation is accurate, involves all those connected to the school and is led effectively by the governing body. The committed and enthusiastic headteacher has a very futuristic vision of what needs to be done to prepare pupils for the 21st century. She is reorganising the curriculum; focusing on real life projects and technological developments are high on her list of priorities. Parents are becoming more aware of new developments through a new internet site. Staff morale is high; teamwork is strong, and parents are very supportive of the school. All this supports the maintenance of high standards and demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' attainment and progress are assessed effectively. The information gained is used well to set priorities for further improvement, for example, in reading, speaking and listening. Rigorous monitoring gives all staff an accurate view of teaching, learning and progress. Joint subject leadership is moving the school forward.

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?	1
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
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?	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	1
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 Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Chipping

Club Lane

Chipping

Preston

Lancashire

PR3 2QH

3 October 2006

Dear Pupils

After spending a day in your school, I want to thank you all so much for making the experience a very enjoyable one. I came to see how well your school is performing and you had a very important role in this, just as your teachers had. You did not let the school down in any way. In fact your excellent behaviour and relationships are a credit to you all and helped me to judge just how well you and your school are doing.

Well, what did I think after my day? I hope my report will help you feel all your hard work is worthwhile. I always ask children for their views of the school and one boy said, 'St Mary's is wicked – it's like one big happy family'. He was right; your school is a very caring place. You have a very committed headteacher who leads your school very successfully and has your well-being at the centre of all she does. She and all the staff make learning very interesting and also make you work hard. As a result, you are learning lots in lessons. They try to make school enjoyable and exciting with the many visits you go on and lots of visitors to school. I was pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well you all get on. I saw lots of pupils who have responsibilities and hold them very well, particularly the 'Fair Trade' project. I was also very pleased to see all the clubs you have. You take regular exercise, and sport is important to you.

I'm sure your teachers always say, 'This is good but you could make it even better if you...'. Well, this is what I am telling your school. To be even better, it needs to further improve your reading, speaking and listening skills. (I know there are plans in place to do this). I have also asked the school to provide you with more experiences of other cultures to help you become more aware of what it is like living in a multi-cultural society, for example, in Preston. You may have some ideas of places you would visit or people you would like to meet to help you with this.

Finally, I would like to thank you again. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Alston

(Lead inspector)