



St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Newchurch

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119664
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291497
Inspection dates 23–24 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jackie Barnes

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | St Peter's Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Newchurch, Rossendale |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | Lancashire, BB4 9EZ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01706 229972 |
| Number on roll (school) | 87 | Fax number | 01706 227923 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs Anne Goy |
| | | Headteacher | Mr Peter Stec |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 March 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school situated in the moorland village of Newchurch in the Rossendale valley. It serves the local Catholic parish and some families in the surrounding area. Almost all are from White British backgrounds with no pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Most families have at least one parent in paid work and take up of free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is a little below average although the school has more than the usual percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. Overall the competence of children when they enter school in the Reception year is about average, but individuals vary considerably in what they know and can do.

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 school, which has gained a high level of confidence from its parents and where pupils' achieve well. Pupils enjoy school and are well behaved. They trust staff and feel safe. Their personal development is good. They are lively, keen to take part in all the school offers and confident in their own ability to learn. They know how to keep safe and healthy, and they look after each other. They laugh and work together tolerantly, and readily share their own views. Pupils settle quickly when they start in the Reception year and make good progress. Standards are above average overall, with most pupils achieving well and attaining at least the standards expected for their age. Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are carefully prepared with interesting resources to help pupils to understand. Occasionally in large mixed age classes, the pace of learning slows a little for some pupils. This is mainly because what they are expected to learn is not clearly enough identified when the lessons or topics are planned. The school provides a good range of subjects and activities as part of its curriculum and is particularly successful in making sure the pupils have quality experiences in art, music and sport. These contribute well to their personal and academic skills. The school provides well for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and they make good progress. The quality of the staff's care and support for pupils is outstanding, and well recognised by parents. The school's arrangements for providing academic guidance are being put into place currently but are not yet evident throughout the school. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, with support from current staff and governors, and good improvements have been made since the last inspection. These improvements presented a challenging agenda for the leadership of a small school and have led to some overburdening of roles. The arrangements for assessments have successfully enabled the school to identify how well pupils throughout year groups are attaining. The pace of pupils' progress is less clearly identified and evaluated.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching and learning further, with particular attention to identifying clearly what pupils at different levels of competence in the same class are expected to learn and how this will be recognised.
- Establish more regular checks on pupils' progress to contribute to the school's prediction and tracking procedures.
- Check that leadership and management roles are underpinned by the best allocation of time and support that resources permit.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average overall. The school's small year groups and the increase in the number of pupils who enter in the older year groups, result in the information from national assessments varying considerably from year to

year. In 2005, the school's national results for seven years olds were significantly above average particularly in reading and mathematics where almost half the pupils achieved the higher Level 3. The 2006 results dipped to about average overall, despite an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level in writing. The results for eleven year olds show a similarly variable pattern. In 2005, the pupils' results were about average overall. In 2006, the results improved markedly and pupils achieved well with almost all pupils attaining the expected Level 4 for their age. In English almost half attained the higher Level 5.

The school's own assessment information and the pupils' work in lessons and their books indicate that almost all pupils achieve as well as they can. When they start school their attainment is as expected overall but individuals differ considerably in what they know and can do. A good start is made in the Foundation Stage. They settle in quickly and most achieve well, reaching close to the expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and some attain similar levels to their classmates by Year 6. Occasionally the pace of a pupil's progress slows, mainly due to the teaching not being well matched to their needs, and the school's systems for predicting and checking they are on target not always being sufficiently rigorous. In some year groups, there is difference between the achievement of boys and girls. The school identifies this quickly and provides effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The school puts a high priority on this aspect. Pupils are well behaved, courteous and self confident. They have outstandingly positive attitudes to learning, are keen to join in the many activities the school offers and attend well. They say they feel safe in school and know how to get help or advice if they need it. All age groups are conscious of the importance of the school and wider community; they look after each other, support national and local charitable causes and recognise their responsibilities when out of school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with positive support and guidance from the faith community and the daily example of the adults in school. Pupils' knowledge of how to make decisions that keep them safe and healthy is good, and when the opportunity arises most make sensible choices. Their future well being is very well supported by their exceptional ability to work together, making concessions to other points of view and having the confidence to present their own.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. The school makes good use of the small number of full-time teachers and part-time staff to provide a wide range of experiences for the

pupils. A reduction in the number of classes from the beginning of this term has resulted in three mixed age classes and not all teachers being with familiar age groups. Most lessons were calm and well organised with a clear sequence of teaching points. Carefully prepared resources, including text books and effective use of the electronic white board, helped to consolidate pupils' understanding and encouraged them to raise questions. Pupils are keen to learn, and those with learning difficulties and disabilities often have an additional adult to help them successfully complete their tasks. Classroom routines are well understood in most classes and pupils are able to get on with their work in groups or individually. This helped staff to sustain teaching with different groups of pupils and respond to individual needs, particularly in English and mathematics. Occasionally the introduction to a lesson was too prolonged and some pupils lost concentration as the teaching was not well matched to their level of competence. Additional adult support for art and music is very effective. A large competent choir is accompanied by percussion and there are examples of high quality art work from Year 2 onwards. Dance is a good feature of physical education for boys and girls, and clearly energises those involved to improve their personal skills.

Assessment information is used effectively to identify pupils who are not attaining the standards expected, and to provide support. It is less well used to plan and check the progress pupils make in lessons and through the school. As a result, the occasional slowing of pace is not always recognised quickly enough to take suitable action before standards dip.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum which provides the required subjects of the National Curriculum and includes good quality personal, social and community education. The quality and range of the enhancements to the basic curriculum are outstanding for a small school. Pupils are enthusiastic about sport, music, creative activities and physically challenging outdoor games as well as quiet games such as chess. Their good personal development and desire to be successful owes much to these opportunities to gain skills in team work, co-operation and leadership. Pupils' with learning difficulties and disabilities are well integrated into these aspects of school life and their good progress in academic work effectively supported by exceptionally thorough investigation of their needs and the best ways to provide for them. For all pupils the provision for literacy and numeracy is systematically planned in line with the national guidance. The planning for the development of pupils' cross-curricular skills and knowledge tends to be left to individual teachers and this results in some lost opportunities for pupils to consolidate their understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and form the main basis of the school's outstanding quality of care. These are supported by good guidance for personal development, which contributes to pupils' self-esteem and their confidence in their

ability to learn. Useful links with other agencies are in place to support pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. In addition the school encourages contacts beyond the school, such as with the college that provides older pupils with elements of language teaching in French and German and with the secondary school. Due attention is paid to safety, and arrangements for child protection are in place. General academic guidance is effectively provided on a day to day basis in lessons. The more systematic approach of setting targets for pupils and developing teachers' marking of books to help pupils see what they need to do to improve their work is evident in some subjects but is not used consistently through the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has faced challenging circumstances over recent years, and as a small school had a significant agenda of change to address following the last inspection. It has done this well, mainly due to the good leadership of the headteacher who also teaches each morning. This is an onerous role which has tended to become overburdened while the school has had staffing issues and significant improvements to undertake. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, with the support of the strong core of staff which the school now has. Pupils' achievement has improved and targets have been met; assessment procedures that carefully track pupils' attainment are in place; parents' confidence is high, the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is well established; the building and resources have been considerably enhanced. Arrangements for predicting and checking pupils' progress are not yet linked sufficiently well to planning their learning: the school now has the data available to do this more rigorously. Governors are well informed and supportive of the school. The school's self-evaluation is well based on good knowledge of the school including the views of staff, parents, pupils and governors. As a legacy of staffing and other issues the school has a budget deficit. Working with the local authority the school has plans to reach a balanced situation over time. The school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| 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

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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| 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 Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Newchurch

St Peter's Road

Newchurch

Rossendale

Lancashire

BB4 9EZ

23 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You helped me to see how much you enjoyed school, valued your friends and looked after each other. You are keen to join in the opportunities your school offers. I was delighted to see the good quality of some of your work in art and in your enthusiasm for music and dance. You work hard and most of you attain the best standards you can. You are well behaved, know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy and cooperate well with your teachers in lessons.

I would like you to be able to build on your present successes, so I have asked your school to make sure that it is clear what you are expected to learn in your lessons and topics, and to keep a close check on your progress. I know you will help by continuing to be enthusiastic, and doing your best when you are working in your groups or alone.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

J M Barnes

Lead inspector