

St Bede's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119674
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291500
Inspection dates	7–8 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony Colgan
Headteacher	Mrs Jenny Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	Preston Road Clayton Green Chorley Lancashire PR6 7EB
Telephone number	01772 335861
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils come from White British backgrounds although a small number are from other backgrounds and are at an early stage of learning English. The majority of these pupils have been admitted to the school during the last year. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The attainment of children when they start school is average for their age.

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 with some outstanding features. The school's leadership ensures that everyone connected to St Bede's works as a team to create a strong Christian ethos where the care, well-being, enjoyment and achievement of every pupil are central to its work.

Pupils' overall achievement is good. The provision in the Reception class is good. The Reception children therefore make good progress and the majority reach or exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they are ready for Year 1. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make consistently good progress throughout the rest of the school and, by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Any evidence of underachievement is quickly identified and improvements are put in place to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to achieve their potential.

The school is exceptionally caring and welcoming and provides excellent support for all its pupils, including those who are particularly vulnerable. The whole school community is warmly supportive of children from other European Community countries. As a result, the newcomers feel at home and are making rapid progress in learning English.

Throughout the school teaching and learning, supported by a rich curriculum, are good with some aspects which are outstanding. The curriculum provides pupils with a wealth of opportunities to fire their imagination and foster effective learning. Very good relationships and excellent systems to check how well pupils are doing underpin the teaching and learning, ensuring good progress. Although most lessons are exciting and fast moving, capture pupils' attention and motivate them, some lessons lack sufficient interest and the pace to keep the more able pupils on their toes.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Lessons and other activities develop pupils' love of learning and an understanding of how they can stay healthy, keep themselves and others safe and to become responsible and exceptionally caring members of their school and local community. The school successfully works with a variety of organisations, including the local colleges, to provide an excellent range of sporting and language experiences.

The school's caring ethos is greatly valued by parents and they are delighted that their children are successful and happy in school. The school is well led and managed and has an accurate insight into its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, it is constantly improving and adapting its provision to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. St Bede's has responded very well to the issues from the previous inspection. It gives good value for money and is well placed to continue to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all lessons have the pace and challenge to sustain the interest of all pupils, especially the more able ones.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and most pupils achieve well. From their average starting points in the Reception class the children make good progress and, by the time they move into Year 1, the majority achieve the learning goals expected for their ages. Pupils continue to make

good progress in Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average. The vast majority of pupils reach the expected standard for their ages and a good proportion exceed it. The school has worked very hard to improve boys' writing and almost half of the boys now exceed the level expected in the assessments at the end of Year 2.

The good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 and standards are above average. The Year 6 test results in 2006 were above average and exceeded the school's challenging targets. Standards in Year 6 are a little lower this year because the class has an unusually large number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Improvements in assessments and the way subjects are taught have improved pupils' progress in mathematics and science, particularly that of the girls.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do well and make good progress towards their individual targets because of the good support they receive from their teachers and teaching assistants. The few pupils with English as an additional language make very good progress and after only a short time in school are reaching the expected standards for their ages and abilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding and makes a significant contribution to their success as learners. This is an extremely friendly school and all pupils, including those who have recently arrived from other countries, are eager learners. Attendance is well above average because pupils really enjoy school and their parents recognise the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Year 6 pupils sum this up in their recipe for a happy class with, 'a gallon of happiness and an ocean of laughter'. Certainly, laughter and purposeful chatter are evident in many lessons. By being a member of the school council, fulfilling monitoring duties, answering the telephone at lunchtimes, raising funds for charity and recycling waste materials, pupils learn to be responsible members of their school community. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. Older pupils learn how to be proficient cyclists and safe pedestrians; exercise at the start of morning lessons, along with an excellent take-up of sporting activities, encourages a determination to keep fit. Pupils grow their own fruit and vegetables and these are used to prepare nutritious and healthy lunches. Pupils' behaviour and care for each other are exemplary. They have a good circle of friends and welcome the new pupils who have recently arrived from Europe. As one pupil said of their new classmate, 'He is our mate and is now in the football team.' An accolade indeed!

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good with outstanding elements. Teaching is very responsive to the different ways boys and girls learn. As a result, boys are now eager writers because they have interesting topics such as 'Pirates' to capture their imagination. More emphasis on investigational science and practical mathematics has brought the subjects alive for girls and their work shows that they are now making consistently better progress in these subjects. Teaching in Year 6 is outstanding. The teacher's real enthusiasm shines through and pupils are captivated by the variety of activity and the pace of learning. For example, in one lesson pupils designed and produced an

advertisement for healthy foods, which they filmed ready for self-evaluation in the next lesson. However, this pace of learning is not always evident throughout the school and some lessons lacked sufficient pace to sustain and further challenge the more able pupils.

Most pupils are clear about what is expected of them because teachers plan lessons carefully and are very clear about what they want their pupils to learn and what information needs to be given to them at the start of the lesson. Marking of work is good and helps pupils to know exactly what they have to do to improve. Older pupils assess their own work and decide how they can achieve the next highest level.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a very good curriculum which is responsive to the needs of all the pupils. Pupils enjoy school because teachers take every opportunity to make school an exciting place to learn.

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers plan a stimulating variety of activities with a good balance between activities led by an adult and opportunities to work independently or with a friend. The outside space is secure, but is not fully exploited to extend learning. It is small and lacking in challenging resources. The school is aware of this and has plans and a budget to improve provision.

There is a very strong emphasis on developing pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Along with an excellent programme of social and health education, this provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living and prepares them well for life and for the next stage of their education. Special events, including weeks devoted to specific themes, add richness as well as providing opportunities to follow up a topic in more detail. Health Week coincided with the inspection and gave an insight into the inventive approaches used to teach pupils how to be safe and lead healthy lives.

The school provides an outstanding array of extra-curricular activities. Pupils appreciate the variety of educational visits which extend their learning effectively. Older pupils have learned to be adventurous and self-reliant when on a residential visit; the youngest pupils make a 'big book' about their visit to the airport.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils achieve well because of the outstanding care, guidance and support the school provides for its pupils. Effective procedures are in place for safeguarding children's welfare, health and safety. The school knows that to be successful learners some pupils need to start the day with a keep fit session to wake up their minds and bodies. Other pupils who have difficulty managing their anger have counselling and engage in relaxation classes and, as a result, their behaviour in school has improved dramatically. Staff identify pupils with learning or behaviour difficulties quickly and work well with a wide range of agencies to ensure that they get the extra help they need. The school has been particularly proactive in welcoming and caring for the increasing number of new arrivals from other European Community countries. Staff are even learning the language of their new pupils to help them to adjust to their new environment, and members of the Catholic community are teaching parents English so they can more confidently help their children at home. Rigorous assessment systems are now in place to set challenging learning targets for the pupils and identify any underachievement quickly.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are very good. The very enthusiastic headteacher, supported by a very effective deputy headteacher, Foundation Stage manager and strong governing body, lead the school with a clear vision, resulting in all aspects of the school's provision having outstanding features. Assessments, test results, the quality of teaching and learning are all monitored effectively to ensure that standards remain high and pupils do not underachieve. For example, standards of boys' writing and of the girls' science and mathematics were identified as areas which could be improved. The school took action which quickly led to improved standards throughout the school. The monitoring of teaching has identified areas to improve, but at present is not rigorous enough to ensure that all lessons are consistently challenging for the more able pupils. Leadership is very successful in working with a variety of partners to enrich children's learning. Sporting and language links are especially effective and are greatly valued by the parents and children. The overwhelming majority of parents think their school is good and their confidence is well founded.

Annex A

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	1
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?	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.

Annex A**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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Bede's Catholic Primary School, Chorley, PR6 7EB

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when we visited your school a short while ago.

These are the important things we liked about your school.

- It was good to see how very well behaved you are and how regularly you attend school. Your attendance is actually much better than most schools, so do keep that up.
- It was very pleasing to see the way you care for each other, especially the younger children and the new children who are learning to speak English.
- We could see by the work in your books and displays around the school that you are all doing well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The boys are working really hard to improve their writing and the girls are working very hard to improve their work in mathematics and science.
- You know the importance of eating sensible food and taking lots of exercise. Do keep that up because it is so important to staying healthy and happy. (We so enjoyed our salads made from the vegetables you had grown yourselves).

You go to a really good school and we saw lessons which were exciting, fun and made you all work really hard. There is just one thing we have asked your teachers to do to make your school even better. We noticed that in a few lessons those of you who learn really fast sometimes do boring work, so we have asked that every single one of your lessons be made really interesting.

Do remember to work really hard and learn lots and lots of new and exciting things. We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Carole Cressey

Lead Inspector