

Leyland St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119677 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 291502 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 June 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Dave Byrne |

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 category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 321 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Michael Hartley |
| Headteacher | Mrs Eileen McNamara |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 January 2003 |
| School address | Haig Avenue Leyland Lancashire PR25 2QA |
| Telephone number | 01772 422431 |
| Fax number | 01772 455133 |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving an area that is mixed in terms of social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average. Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage are just below those which are typical for their age. Almost all pupils are from White British families and no pupil is at an early stage of English acquisition. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. There have been a number of unavoidable staff changes in the last few months. The school provides out of school care in the mornings and afternoons.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. Its very caring approach is firmly based on a Christian ethos in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued. Caring staff ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in school life. Pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good, which contributes to good behaviour, a willingness to learn and the development of friendships between pupils. Very good strategies are being used to cultivate pupils' personal and emotional development and support those who feel vulnerable. As a result, the school achieves one of its key aims, that of ensuring that everyone in the school treats others with dignity and respect. Pupils enjoy school but attendance is below average despite considerable efforts to improve it. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of their education.

Children have a good start to school life in the Foundation Stage. After starting with skills that are just below those typical for their age, particularly in terms of communication, language and literacy, they make good progress and most reach the standards expected for their age by the end of Reception. In Key Stage 1, standards have been broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics in recent years. This year, there has been a positive impact on pupils' progress as a result of effective strategies to improve speaking, reading and writing. In Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science and this represents satisfactory achievement. However, the more able pupils should achieve higher standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lessons have some good features but expectations for the more able pupils are not high enough and their work is often too easy for them. Overall, procedures for academic support and guidance are good. The school uses its assessment and tracking systems effectively to identify groups and individuals who should be achieving higher standards. However, the marking of pupils' work is effective in some classes but in others it does not show the pupils well enough how to improve.

Many positive changes have been made to the curriculum recently, which have resulted in enrichment in pupils' learning and include a good range of extra-curricular activities. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to practise their basic skills of literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) across the full range of subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has maintained a good educational direction through a period when a number of unavoidable staff changes have occurred. The management of the Foundation Stage and of the school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The school's leaders are very caring and foster an ethos in which pupils can achieve well in their personal development. The newly established senior leadership team is an effective group and recognises that academic standards should be higher. School improvement planning reflects the school's weaknesses but the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is too generous.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the work set for the more able pupils matches their ability.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in the full range of subjects.
- Work with parents more effectively to improve attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are just below those typical of children their age and there is a weakness in children's use of language. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and generally reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress is satisfactory and they reach average standards. The results of national assessments made by the teachers in reading, writing and mathematics have declined over the past three years – they were above average but are now average. The teachers are working to raise standards and their efforts are resulting in better progress in speaking, reading and writing. This year, the teachers' assessments of Year 2 indicate that standards are similar to those of last year in writing and mathematics but in reading, pupils have done much better.

Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2 and reach average standards in Year 6. The results of the Year 6 national tests have been consistently in line with the national averages in English, mathematics and science in recent years. However, some of the most able pupils are not reaching their full potential because of shortcomings in the design of the curriculum and a lack of challenge in some lessons. Pupils lack opportunities to apply their basic skills of literacy, mathematics and computing in the full range of the curriculum, to use their initiative and to work independently. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from effective support, which ensures that they make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The Memorial Garden and the development of 'pupil buddies' to help others typify the high priority the school gives to pupils' personal development. The good start to education in the Foundation Stage gives children a secure basis on which to build and acquire a wide range of interpersonal skills as they progress through the school. They develop good attitudes to learning and the vast majority enjoy school. Behaviour is good overall; although, a few pupils, mostly boys, can be rather boisterous. Instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy eating and initiatives such as 'wake and shake'; playground games successfully develop good attitudes to exercise. They have a good knowledge of how to stay safe. Pupils' views are valued. The school council promotes a good sense of citizenship and pupils are frequently asked for their opinions. Pupils are keen to support the community and help charities; for example, by sending clothes to an orphanage in Malawi. Despite the school's effort to reduce absence, which has included working closely with outside agencies, attendance is below average. Given the average academic standards and good levels of personal development, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and account for pupils' satisfactory progress. Positive relationships and good classroom organisation are strong features of most of the teaching but expectations are not high enough for the most able pupils. Lively and stimulating teaching inspires children in the Foundation Stage, throughout which a good emphasis on speaking makes good inroads into reducing children's weaknesses in language. Good use of role play excites pupils and inspires their learning in Key Stage 1 but it is not as effectively used in Key Stage 2. The smaller number of pupils in upper Key Stage 2 classes for literacy and numeracy provides good opportunities for pupils to respond individually to the challenging questioning by teachers; although, challenge is not always enough to stretch the most able pupils. Teaching assistants ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

In literacy and mathematics lessons, teachers are steadily improving the use of assessment to identify the needs of most pupils. Teachers mark work in order to guide pupils towards how to improve, but the quality of marking is not consistent between classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The Foundation Stage curriculum helps children to make good progress, despite a weakness in resources for outdoor learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, planning is satisfactory. The school is working to improve it but there are still too few planned opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in all subjects and this adversely affects pupils' progress. In Key Stage 1, the school is increasing the emphasis of the curriculum on speaking, reading and writing skills, and has increased the time given for writing in Key Stage 2. These changes are resulting in better progress in lessons. The school makes good provision for music and for raising pupils' awareness of a modern foreign language. The school provides well for the development of pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education.

Pupils have good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities. Educational visits are relatively few but a good range of visitors to school, such as theatre groups, poets, storytellers and the police and fire service, complement learning well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A dedicated staff team ensure that the school is a very caring and happy place, which provides a safe environment. The safeguarding of pupils and child protection are effectively managed. Thoughtful strategies promote pupils' personal development. Health and safety has a high profile in all that the school does.

Procedures for academic support and guidance are good. The school uses its assessment and tracking systems effectively to identify groups and individuals who should be achieving higher standards. This contributes to very good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural

difficulties and good guidance for pupils with learning difficulties. However, there is a weakness in the marking of some work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The headteacher has maintained a good educational direction through a period when a number of unavoidable staff changes have occurred. The caring and nurturing ethos ensures that pupils enjoy learning and achieve high standards in their personal development.

The new senior leadership team is getting to grips with raising standards. They are making good use of assessment data and the monitoring of teaching and learning to identify how to raise standards, and the outcomes of this work is reflected in the school improvement plan. Although the school knows what it needs to do to improve, its self-evaluation is too generous in its judgements.

The governors are supportive and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Standards are not as high in Key Stage 1 as they were at the time of the last inspection but recent improvements are leading to better progress. Given the effectiveness of the new school leadership team and the improvements made recently, the school shows that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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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? | 3 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 3 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |
| 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? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| 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

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Leyland St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, PR25 2QA

We are writing to thank you for your help during our visit to your school and to share our views with you. We were impressed by how friendly you are, not just with us, but most importantly with each other. Most of the time you behave well and you usually work hard and try your best in lessons.

We agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. The younger children in the Nursery and Reception get a great start to school life. In Years 1 to 6, particularly in Key Stage 2, recent changes in staffing have affected some of your learning but things are settling down now. New ideas are being brought in to liven up your lessons and make learning fun. Although you achieve average standards many of you could do better. At times, we feel that some of you are given work that is too easy and we have suggested to your teachers that harder and more interesting work would help some of you to reach higher standards. Teachers can help you improve your work by giving you more chances to practise your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in all subjects. All the jobs you do in school and the way many of you help others, for example at lunchtimes and during lessons, are certainly helping you to become good citizens of the future. It is good to see that many of you know what you need to do to be safe and keep healthy and fit.

Your headteacher provides all of you with a very caring place to learn. You are given lots of help by teachers and teaching assistants, which means that you feel safe and secure at all times. We are concerned about the poor attendance of some pupils. This doesn't help them to learn and it is important that the school finds ways of reducing absence.

We hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne, Sue Sharkey and Geoff Yates

Additional Inspectors