

St Augustine of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119491
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313314
Inspection dates	1–2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Hardisty
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2003
School address	Lowerhouse Lane Burnley Lancashire BB12 6HZ
Telephone number	01282 426938
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school serving an urban area with considerable social and economic deprivation. There has been a significant increase recently in new pupils joining at other than the usual times and also the arrival of a number of Traveller children. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background with none requiring support for English as an additional language. An above average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well 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

This is a good school which enjoys a good reputation amongst parents and strong links with the community. Pupils develop into responsible and thoughtful young people because of the school's excellent ethos of care. They are respectful of others; their behaviour is excellent and they are well prepared for life ahead. Parents are quite rightly pleased with the school's welcoming, family atmosphere. The vast majority of pupils are happy to come to school and attend regularly.

Under the effective leadership team, standards are improving. The pupils' achievement is good although the school's test results do not fully reflect this. In 2007, standards were low with a particular weakness in mathematics. All data, however, needs to be treated with care. This is because of the impact of pupils joining the school who have had disruptions to their education coupled with the poor attendance of a few pupils. Inspection evidence shows that the achievement of Year 6 pupils who are educated wholly in St Augustine's is good. These pupils start Reception with attainment below that typical for their age. Those who left in 2007 did so with standards that were average overall and above average in English. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement. In Key Stage 1, standards in 2007 were low overall in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recent initiatives involving the local authority have increased the rate of progress, particularly in mathematics. The school's records and inspection evidence indicate that the rate of progress is rising across the school. The school predicts confidently that standards at Years 2 and 6 in 2008 will be higher than in 2007.

Pupils are making faster progress because teaching and learning has improved. It is now good with outstanding features in Years 5 and 6. The diverse range of pupils' needs is very well managed. Good use of assessment information assists staff in making effective plans to cater for all pupils, many of whom have gaps in their learning due to disruptions in their education. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress, often after transferring from other schools. Very good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to motivate and inspire pupils and the good curriculum makes lessons relevant and interesting. Good personal, social, health and citizenship education gives pupils a good awareness of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Although pupils willingly take on various jobs around school, they are not as confident as they might be in taking responsibility for their own learning. This holds back progress in some areas of learning, for example, in solving problems in mathematics and using investigational skills in science.

The school's leadership and management are good at all levels. The senior leaders ensure that the school's self-evaluation is generally accurate so it highlights the necessary areas for improvement, such as English and mathematics. The school has developed well since the last inspection, particularly in the last two years, and shows good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in Reception. Teaching is good and the children progress well. They start school in the Reception Year with skills that are generally below those typical for their age. By the time they transfer to Year 1, they have made significant strides in their learning. Although their attainment is generally low in communication, language and literacy, many reach

the levels expected for other areas of learning. These children work with pupils in Year 1, and a very effective partnership between the teacher and teaching assistants makes sure that their needs are met well. Good liaison with local nursery schools ensures a very smooth transfer for the children into full time education. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards further in English and mathematics.
- Encourage pupils to develop more independence in their own learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good although standards are below average. The small year groups mean that the results of national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6 must be considered alongside further information about the progress of individual pupils. In Key Stage 1, standards have declined in recent years, reflecting the increase in pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Inspection evidence confirms the school's own assessment of current standards as being below average by Year 2. Better teaching has lifted the predicted standards of current Year 2 pupils to being higher than in 2007.

In 2007, over a fifth of pupils in Year 6 were relatively new arrivals to school. These pupils, and a significant number of Traveller children, most of whom have low attendance for cultural reasons, had significant gaps in their learning. As a result, their standards overall were below those gained by other pupils even though they made good progress in lessons. These factors combined to lower the overall standards in the school.

Unconfirmed results of the 2007 Year 6 national tests were below the 2006 national average. When these results are analysed, however, pupils who completed the bulk of their education in the school made good progress and their standards were above average in English and average in mathematics and science. Given the low starting point of children in the Foundation Stage this represents good achievement. School records show that progress is improving, particularly in mathematics. Inspection evidence supports the school's view that results in 2008 are likely to rise because of an increase in the number of pupils reaching standards above those expected for their age. Very good provision for ICT results in pupils developing very significant strengths in the use of computer technology to support their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Excellent behaviour and a friendly atmosphere permeate the school. Pupils' effort and enjoyment are evident and the vast majority concentrate well and take pride in their work. This contributes to their good academic progress in lessons. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and spiritual development is excellent. Music welcomes pupils to school and signals playtimes, contributing well to pupils' calmness. Pupils successfully learn about different cultures through the curriculum, school assemblies and special celebrations. Initiatives such as the Health and Safety Week have contributed to pupils' good understanding of how to be safe and healthy. Pupils readily agree that they feel safe in school and say bullying is rare. They willingly help with many aspects of school organisation on a day-to-day basis, for example by taking turns to present the daily school broadcasts. Pupils' confidence in taking responsibility for their own learning, however, is

generally not as advanced as it could be. Pupils have a good understanding of the essential features of democracy. Their growing personal skills, including those in literacy and numeracy, and their maturity provide a good basis for their future well-being. The large majority of pupils have good attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features. Very good teamwork between teachers and skilled teaching assistants enables the diverse needs of pupils to be effectively managed. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, Traveller children and new arrivals to school, make good progress in lessons. Teachers generally set challenging work with suitably high expectations. This is especially apparent in upper Key Stage 2 where pupils love their work and produce ICT work which is of a high standard for their age. Throughout the school, teachers have a very good rapport with their pupils. As a result, behaviour is excellent, enabling pupils to get on with their work without distraction. However, in some lessons the pace of learning is too slow and pupils do not have enough responsibility for their own work. Teachers present and explain new learning clearly, often using resources skilfully, such as interactive whiteboards and laptop technology. The best teaching allows pupils to summarise and assess their progress against the learning objectives for that lesson. Although marking is done conscientiously, it is not used consistently to guide pupils to the next stage of learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets requirements and has strengths in the provision for the Foundation Stage, ICT and for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many significant developments are occurring which are improving the planning of subjects, most particularly in literacy and mathematics. This is improving progress across the school but is not yet fully evident in national test results. Regular events such as weeks for history and for multicultural education successfully broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding and enable them to use literacy and numeracy in a variety of situations. Excellent use is made of ICT to bring learning alive and inspire technologists of the future. For example, older pupils use digital technology to create imaginary news broadcasts and to create their own mini-films. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of educational visits and visitors; many pupils benefit greatly from the annual residential week in the Lake District. The range of extra-curricular clubs has increased greatly in recent years and provides many opportunities for pupils to develop new skills and experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support is outstanding and pupils have good academic support and guidance. Exceptional levels of day-to-day care ensure that the many pupils with challenging behaviour and/or learning difficulties are very effectively managed by teachers with excellent support from teaching assistants. This ensures excellent inclusion and enables all pupils to work without being distracted. The protection and safety of pupils has a very high priority. All required safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place. Imaginative strategies successfully

raise pupils' self-image and confidence. Pupils glow with pride, for example, at receiving certificates to reward good work or desirable behaviour. Academic guidance has improved in recent years and is now good. Assessment information is used to track pupils' progress and initiate action to tackle underachievement. Despite good efforts by the school, the support of many parents for their children's education is relatively weak which holds back the rate of progress of some pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's effective leadership is steering the school very successfully through a new phase of development in response to its recent change of intake and the need to manage staff changes. She is well supported by a talented deputy headteacher who has a very clear picture of how to raise standards even further through effective initiatives. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and the main areas for development. Inevitably, its energies at present are focused on dealing with the demands of increased pupil mobility and the need to improve standards further. The school sets challenging targets which have been notched to a higher level with the understanding that more pupils can reach above average standards. International links and close liaison with the local authority are giving the staff confidence to be more creative in development planning. Exciting initiatives are underpinned by effective staff training and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning.

Governance is good. Governors' expertise is valuable in aspects of the school's work, such as finance, health and safety and keeping an eye on standards. Finances are well managed and deployed effectively. The school gives good value for money.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

2 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Augustine of Canterbury Roman Catholic Primary School, Burnley, Lancashire,
BB12 6HZ

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful during my recent visit to your school. I am pleased to know that you love school and enjoy the many activities that you do. I am writing to share my findings with you.

I agree with you and your parents that St Augustine's is a good school. It is very caring and goes that extra mile to help each of you when needed. It does a very good job helping those of you who have recently started at the school so that you settle in quickly. Even though many of you find some of your learning difficult, most of you do well in catching up and those of you who have stayed in school for most of your education achieve well.

I was very impressed by your behaviour which is excellent and the enthusiasm you have for learning. The way you use computer technology is very good and maybe there will be some film makers of the future coming from your school!

The teaching you receive is good. You are encouraged to work hard and usually lessons are fun as well. I feel you could do even better though, especially in using your own ideas and skills to work on your own in subjects such as mathematics and science. The school is going to encourage you to use your own ideas more in lessons. This way you will achieve even higher standards.

Your school is a warm, friendly place. Your headteacher is at the heart of the school and makes wise choices to give you a good education. She not only cares for you as people, but also wants you to do well academically so that you have a good chance in life.

I hope that you all continue to be so welcoming and friendly and do your best to put others before yourselves. Remember to do your best with school work because it gives you so many choices when you grow up.

Best wishes

Dave Byrne

Lead Inspector