

Holy Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119654
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313375
Inspection dates	21–22 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter McKay

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	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Christopher Gorton
Headteacher	Mrs Alixena Lubomski
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Holland Place off Reedyford Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 8FT
Telephone number	01282 612319
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves an area with above average levels of social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is just below the national average. Most pupils are of White British origin, with a very small proportion of minority ethnic pupils, mainly of Pakistani heritage. Very few do not have English as a first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average although slightly higher than average numbers have a statement of special educational needs. There is a very small number of looked after children. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for less than a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is satisfactory with strengths in pastoral care, personal development and the curriculum. It successfully lives up to its motto of 'Caring and Sharing' by providing a warm, safe and friendly place to learn, which contributes well to pupils' good personal development and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships at all levels are good and lessons are conducted in an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Pupils clearly enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Some say they would even come at weekends if they could! Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep healthy and they feel safe and secure in school. Their good social skills and sound basic skills in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The school has strong links with the local community and pupils make a considerable contribution to their own and the wider community. The school is highly valued by parents.

Achievement for almost all pupils is satisfactory. Pupils make a good start when they start in the Reception class but a significant minority of pupils, particularly the more able, do not build well enough on their achievements. Although progress is satisfactory, standards reached by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 remain broadly average. There is no discernible upward trend of improvement from year to year. Not all targets have been met in the last two years. Year 6 results have been affected by the underachievement of some higher ability pupils who have not all reached the levels of which they are capable. Results in 2007 showed improvement in English reflecting the priority given to writing in the school's improvement plans.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff have a good knowledge of the subjects and age groups they teach. Information on the progress of individual pupils is used to plan tasks pitched at the right level for most pupils. However, work provided for more able pupils is not always demanding enough and this holds back their progress. Lessons are well managed and purposeful. Too much use is made of 'off the shelf' schemes of work and an associated worksheets. These restrict opportunities for pupils to manage their own work and develop independent learning skills. Pupils respond to clear expectations for learning and behaviour with enthusiasm and hard work although some admit they could do a little more if they made the effort. They feel well informed about their progress although marking does not always give them enough guidance on how to do better.

A good curriculum not only meets requirements but provides a wide range of additional activities which offer something for all pupils, whatever their interests or aptitude. Their readiness and capacity to participate and take responsibility for planning and organising activities within and outside school is something that will be of value in later life. Their work with local schools in a 'creative cluster' has forged productive links throughout a diverse community.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. A new senior team, under the strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, monitors all aspects of the school's work. This has tended to over-estimate its performance. However, there is a growing awareness that for achievement to improve, pupils must be given and reach more challenging targets that expect good progress of them. Staff at all levels are working collaboratively to bring about the changes needed. However, actions targeted specifically at raising standards are not given high enough priority in improvement plans. Improvements have been made since the last inspection with the significant exception of the better use of targets. Together with more recent developments, this indicates that the school has the capacity to improve. Governors are very committed and

visit the school frequently to provide help and support. Their sound financial management underpins the school's long term development plans and ensures satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. Children enjoy school and have settled well into the well planned routines. The school's assessment records show that, on entry, children's attainment is well below that which is typically found. Personal development, communication, language and literacy and an understanding of numbers are the areas in greatest need for development. Across the curriculum, children achieve well and outstanding assessment procedures show that most make good progress. Leadership and management of the curriculum are particularly strong. Opportunities to play and work in designated areas and outside are managed well. There are many opportunities for practical learning including role-play. These initiatives are well supported by skilled teaching assistants who ensure that all experiences are built on purposefully. The adults involved have a good understanding of all the required areas of learning. In all activities, work is matched well to children's individual needs. Very strong teaching enables most children to reach levels above those found in many schools in all that they do by the end of Reception.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give the highest priority in improvement plans to raising standards and improving pupils' achievement, especially for more able pupils.
- Set targets and work that challenge all pupils, particularly the more able, and develops their ability to manage their own work and learn independently.
- Improve the consistency and quality of marking across the school so that all pupils understand what they can do to improve their work.

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

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children join the Reception class with skills that are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception year to reach standards that exceed expectations for their age. In Key Stage 1 they do not build well enough on this good start and although they reaching broadly average standards, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should, including the more able. Standards in Key Stage 1 have declined slightly over the last three years, matching the decline in levels of development of the intake. Results in tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated over recent years but have been generally in line with those found nationally. Where improvements have been made they have not been sustained. Results in all subjects in 2007 showed an improvement on those of the previous year. However, standards in the present Year 6 are lower and reflect a much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Measures of progress between Years 3 and 6 have fallen sharply in the last two years, especially in English. This is because a significant minority of pupils, particularly the more able, are not reaching the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development is good. Pupils are friendly and polite and form good relationships with adults and with each other. Almost all have positive attitudes to learning, underpinned by good behaviour. They enjoy all the school has to offer. Attendance is above average. The school's embedded values ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils trust and respect their teachers and say they feel safe in school. They are emphatic that they understand the agreed rules. They say that there are very few instances of bullying and that teachers deal with any inappropriate behaviour effectively. Pupils understand the reasons for adopting a healthy lifestyle and take regular exercise and choose suitable food. They enjoy taking responsibility to help others and are proud of the work of the school council. Pupils say that teachers listen to their ideas and opinions and when possible act on them. Pupils know they need to work hard at all times to raise their standards although some would admit they do not always do so. Teachers have set in place ways to help pupils to become independent learners and to manage their own work; these strategies need more time to become totally effective. Links with other schools and the community are well established. A strong relationship with the linked secondary school prepares them well for the next phase of education and eventually for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Lesson planning is based on teachers' good knowledge of pupils' needs, derived from regular and accurate assessment. It shows clearly what pupils are expected to learn, so tasks and activities focus on what is important and allow pupils to learn at different levels. Those who need additional help receive effective support to overcome difficulties. Most pupils are attentive learners who work hard and behave well; any occasional lapses are well managed by teachers. The school's procedures for monitoring teaching are helping to improve the skills of individual teachers but are not yet as effective in highlighting whole-school areas for development. More able and faster working pupils do not always receive work to extend their learning, due in part to an over-dependence on prepared worksheets which lack stimulus and challenge. This also limits the opportunity for pupils at all levels to take responsibility for their own learning and work independently. Marking is inconsistent and does not do enough to explain what has been done well or how work might be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The broadly based curriculum is enriched through a wide range of after-school activities, particularly sport and music, and is good overall. Work to enable pupils to acquire basic skills in English and mathematics is well established across the school. Opportunities for learning through using ideas studied in one subject to extend pupils' skills in reading and writing are being developed. These strategies have not yet increased achievement or raised standards. Pupils relish the range of community ventures that are provided especially educational trips, sporting challenges and residential visits. These activities successfully foster interest in learning and contribute immensely to pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The level of pastoral care is exceptionally good. The atmosphere for working and learning is calm and supportive. There is a strong commitment to providing for pupils' welfare. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are given high priority. Risk assessments are managed well for visits and for school activities. Safeguarding procedures are in place. Child protection strategies are well managed and pupils have a good understanding of how to be safe. Pupils throughout the school say that adults are always ready to help them. They are enthusiastic about the healthy meal options at lunchtime and enjoy the many opportunities for physical exercise. There are developing strategies in place for tracking pupils' progress. This information is not yet being used effectively to set challenging enough targets for learning or to identify underachievement, especially for pupils capable of higher attainment. The monitoring of work provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well established and is effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new senior leadership team provides a clear sense of direction, purpose and challenge. Staff at all levels feel valued, involved and that their views are taken account of. A strong sense of teamwork is evident and staff accept the need for change. Middle managers are held to account and feel empowered and well supported in carrying out their roles. Systems for monitoring and evaluating all aspects of the work of the school have been put in place and have brought about some improvements in provision. However, this work is yet to have an impact on raising standards because it is not sufficiently well grounded in the analysis of data to identify and address areas of underperformance. Consequently, targets are set at a level of challenge sufficient only to maintain standards at their current level. Actions targeted specifically at raising standards are not given high enough priority in improvement plans. Governors ensure statutory requirements are met, are very supportive and are actively involved in the everyday life of the school. They do not hold the school to account for its academic performance rigorously enough.

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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?	3
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?	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	3

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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?	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?	3
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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

23 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Holy Saviour Roman Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 8HD

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out so much about the school. You and your parents say that the school is a welcoming and caring community which helps you to become responsible and confident people. After our short visit we certainly agree with you.

We were pleased to hear that you find the school both an enjoyable and safe place to be and that adults are always ready to listen to you and help with any problems. Some of you even said you would like to come at the weekend if that were possible! You behave well and get along with each other and with adults. You have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and we could see you putting it into practice at lunchtime. We also found out how very keen you are to take part in extra activities by listening to many of you perform in the musical concert.

After seeing some of your lessons and looking at your work we feel that your teachers and support staff help you to make satisfactory progress in your work, which means you are doing as well as expected. We think that some of you could do better, especially those of you capable of reaching the higher levels in tests. We have asked the school to set you higher targets and provide harder work which really stretches you. We want you to make more of your own decisions about your work and be able to carry out tasks without the teachers guiding you every step of the way. We have asked the school to give you even more advice on how you can improve when they mark your work. We know that most of you work hard but some of you told us you felt you could sometimes make more effort. It is very important that you do that at all times.

Thank you once again for being so polite and helpful. We wish every one of you well for the future and hope that you will always work hard and enjoy school.

Best wishes

Peter McKay

Lead inspector