

# St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119655
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	313376
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Bennetts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father John Price
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Borman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lomeshaye Road Nelson Lancashire BB9 0DQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 613906
<b>Fax number</b>	01282 613906

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. As a church school it seeks to serve the wider community in which it is located, both Catholic and non-Catholic; it welcomes pupils of all backgrounds and about a half are from minority ethnic families. Few pupils are from affluent households; the proportion registered for free school meals is higher than average. The number of pupils joining the school during Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is higher than normal, and many in Year 5 and Year 6 came to the school quite recently. About half of the new arrivals are from South Asia or Eastern Europe and are still learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils registered as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally, but there are more than usual with a statement of special educational need. During this school year, a number of key staff have needed to have substantial periods of time out of school.

## Key for inspection grades

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 some good features. It is a happy school and enjoys the overwhelming support of parents. Pupils' personal development is strong due to good pastoral care. The curriculum is good: it is enriched by opportunities for social and cultural development that vigorously promote harmony between pupils from different backgrounds. On many occasions, opportunities for contemplation and spiritual development are highly effective.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils enter the school with capabilities that are below average; those leaving Year 6 show standards that are generally below average, but better in literacy than in mathematics or science. For several years, pupils have been making good progress in the very well organised Foundation Stage. With recent staffing changes, pupils now at the end of Key Stage 1 have achieved well and their standards are similar to those found nationally. Throughout Key Stage 2 progress is more limited.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Reception and Key Stage 1 lessons are interesting and motivate children to learn; teachers have a good grasp of how each child's learning can be improved. There are some good lessons in Key Stage 2, but learning is no more than satisfactory due to lack of consistency in the teaching. The monitoring of pupils' progress and planning work to meet pupils' needs do not yet have enough impact. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 are not led with sufficient vigour. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and the marking of books is good.

Personal development is a strength of the school. Attitudes and behaviour have improved. Behaviour throughout the school is good; as they play together on the yard, the behaviour and social interaction of the older pupils is sometimes outstanding. Pupils are very positive in their attitudes to school and parents are full of praise for the school's work. The school is working to improve attendance which is satisfactory. All pupils are well cared for and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Senior staff and governors know how things stand and recognise that due to circumstances that have arisen because of unavoidable staff absence, leadership in Key Stage 2 has not been firm enough. In some subjects in Key Stage 2 pupils have not progressed fast enough and the school has not been able to ensure that previously learnt knowledge is secure. Considerable improvement in achievement in Key Stage 1, and in behaviour, show that the school has good capacity to make the necessary further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

At the inspection in June 2004, the leadership and management of Foundation Stage were found to be very good and a model for the school. They still are. Children join the Reception class with abilities that are lower than normal; by the end of the year they are close to what is expected for this age. A few are showing literacy and numeracy skills that are more typical of Year 1. All children have become keen to learn and are able to concentrate for sustained periods, even at the end of a warm afternoon. Social interaction between children of all backgrounds is developing very well. Teachers plan well. A very effective assessment and recording system gives a clear picture of how children are developing and what they next need to tackle. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the provision. Indoor and outdoor activities are

exciting and include a very suitable balance of direction by staff and opportunity to develop independence. Teaching is mostly very good. Occasionally, the most able could be challenged more systematically, and occasionally sharper focus could be given to following instructions precisely.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve achievement and standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Improve teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, especially in checking pupils' progress and planning work that tackles identified weaknesses.
- Strengthen leadership in Key Stage 2 with a focus on closer monitoring of teaching and learning and evaluating pupils' performance.

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**

Overall achievement in the school is satisfactory. Children join the Reception class with skills and abilities that are weaker than those found nationally. They make good progress, and after a year their capabilities are almost as high as is usual with children of their age. Standards at the start of Year 1 are now higher than they were some years ago when those now in Year 6 were at that point.

Achievement in Key Stage 1 has improved considerably over the last year, with new staff teaching Year 1 and Year 2, and renewed vitality in the organisation of work. The recently completed national assessments for Year 2 show attainment that is similar to national standards. Pupils are now making good progress in Key Stage 1.

Pupils in Key Stage 2 had below average standards on leaving Year 2. For some, subsequent teaching has been unsettled, with staff absence and some teachers new to their roles. Standards in national assessments at age 11 were low in 2006. In 2007 they were better, but significantly below average in mathematics and very weak in science. Teachers' assessments for the current Year 6 suggest a slight improvement but overall standards remain below average. In relation to their starting points, pupils in Key Stage 2 have been making satisfactory progress in English, but in mathematics and science pupils could make more progress. Throughout the school, pupils of different abilities and from different backgrounds, including those starting to learn English, all make similar progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils greatly enjoy school. Their behaviour and attitudes are a credit to them, their parents and the school. Pupils know what is expected, work hard, and gladly help each other. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They say that unpleasantness between pupils is very rare and that any difficulties are soon sorted out by staff. Though behaviour was not as good as it should have been a year or two ago, the problem has been tackled well. Behaviour is now good and pupils feel that the sanctions that the school uses are fair and effective. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils make a strong contribution to school life, for example, through the school council and work as mentors to younger children.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, with instances of outstanding social maturity as pupils of differing backgrounds work and play together. On occasion, pupils' spiritual maturity is impressive for their age, as pupils join in thoughtful reflection and show empathy for the way others practise their faith.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory; they have led to satisfactory outcomes in Year 6. However, teaching and learning are good in Foundation Stage and are now good in Key Stage 1. Good teaching with younger pupils engages their interest, sets high expectations and is well tailored to their needs.

Some good lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. Good teaching is lively, draws out pupils' ideas and builds on them to establish pupils' confidence; it is well structured. However, there has been some disruption to teaching in Key Stage 2 due to staff absence and changes of teacher. Moreover, though staff have strengths in the teaching of literacy, they are less secure with mathematics. In some mathematics lessons, the crucial steps in establishing concepts and methods have not been thought through thoroughly at the planning stage. Pupils' previous weaknesses in mathematics have not necessarily been identified precisely or tackled effectively. For instance, at the end of Year 3 about half the pupils cannot reliably subtract single digit numbers from about 20. In science, the quantity of older pupils' recorded work is slim and it is patchy in coverage. There is a need for stronger and more consistent leadership with the monitoring of progress, the planning of teaching and evaluation of effectiveness across the curriculum in Key Stage 2.

Teaching assistants provide high quality support, with particularly effective work in Reception and in support of pupils starting to learn English. There is good feedback to pupils on a day-to-day basis; written comments helpfully clarify what has been done well and what could be better.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

- The curriculum fulfils all requirements; moreover, it provides enrichment, excitement and fun, so that pupils are keen to learn and enjoy growing up together. There is good support for those who are learning to speak English to enable them to play a full part in school. Activities in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are very stimulating: the Reception outdoor classroom offers a market stall, plants to water, bikes to ride; 'auntie' visits a Year 2 history lesson with her 1950's suitcase for her trip to Blackpool.

The curriculum is enriched by lessons in German, a wealth of much appreciated extra-curricular activities, and an abundance of visits out of school including an opportunity for a week in the Lake District for Key Stage 2. Pupils particularly enjoy Friday afternoon Golden Time, which supports and promotes much that is good in their personal development. However, in Key Stage 2 the curriculum for mathematics and science has insufficient vigour and coherence.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for. Checks to safeguard pupils are appropriate and out of school visits are planned for safety. Staff anticipate pupils' needs. Pupils are willing to turn to adults in school for support and advice. All staff consistently praise pupils' achievements. Parents speak highly of the care and support provided by the school.

Good procedures help new pupils to settle and to move from stage to stage through school. Vulnerable pupils and those who find it hard to learn are well cared for and links with external agencies to support their needs are effective. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and make a strong contribution.

Whilst pupils' assessment and tracking procedures show promise, they are not yet fully developed in Key Stage 2.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There has been effective improvement since the last inspection when standards and teaching in Key Stage 1 were weak and evaluation of the school's work and monitoring of pupils' progress needed refinement. Adroit deployment of staff is enabling Key Stage 1 pupils to make much better headway. Evaluation has been sharpened. Instances of poor behaviour have been addressed by a firm behaviour policy and effective guidance for staff. The tracking of pupils' progress is developing, but has further to go in Key Stage 2. The school now welcomes pupils from a wider range of backgrounds than the traditional Catholic community; this has been enormously successful in promoting a close relationship with the neighbourhoods that the school serves. The school uses resources very well and staff deployment has been exceptionally shrewd; the use of teaching assistants is a particular strength. Though outcomes are at present only satisfactory in Key Stage 2, the school makes best use of available staff and its budget.

The headteacher and governors have a clear appreciation of how things stand, and know that leadership in Key Stage 2 needs to be strengthened - especially in developing the monitoring and improvement of teaching. Sustained improvement in Reception and recent improvement in Key Stage 1 demonstrate good capacity to move the school further forward. The large governing body is representative of the diverse community that the school serves. Governors are keenly aware of priorities for further improvement; they recognise the contribution of staff at all levels and are sensitive to their needs. They provide clear advice and ask pertinent questions based on their informed knowledge of the school.





## 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?	3
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 <sup>1</sup> 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	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	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 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	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**

18 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John Southworth Roman Catholic Primary School, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 0DQ

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and found that the school gives you a satisfactory education that is good in many ways.

Pupils in Reception do really well. Progress is now good in Year 1 and Year 2, but in Key Stage 2 progress needs to be improved. Teaching is generally satisfactory and most effective with the younger classes. The way the school is run is satisfactory and there have been substantial improvements.

You enjoy school, you get on well together, and you are keen to learn. Though there was some poor behaviour a while ago, that is no longer a problem. We saw older pupils having lots of fun on the playground, and we saw Year 6 pupils reflecting prayerfully about the contribution they can make to help those around them as they go through life. You know how to keep fit, how to keep safe, and you are keen to improve the environment. You are well looked after by the staff and you get plenty of support if you are unhappy or unwell. You have some wonderful opportunities in addition to those that are usually available: the zoo, the farm, the Lake District week – and of course the German lessons.

As you know, some teachers have been off school for a while this year, and some teachers have changed classrooms. Partly because of this, progress in Key Stage 2 has not always been as good as it might be. We have asked the school to make sure that things are properly sorted out in Key Stage 2 so that everyone does well. In particular, we think mathematics and science could be better. You can help – for instance, by making sure you know the multiplication tables perfectly and practising them at home.

We know you are proud of your school and enjoy being there. Attendance is satisfactory, but for some of you it could be better. Try to avoid being off school for holidays and try to get there unless you are really quite unwell. We wish you every success in your education.

Yours sincerely

Jim Bennetts

Lead inspector