

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clayton-le-Moors

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119659
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313378
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elaine Maguire
Headteacher	Mr Anthony Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2005
School address	Devonshire Drive Clayton-le-Moors Accrington Lancashire BB5 5RJ
Telephone number	01254 231277
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small school. Most pupils are White British, with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Socio-economic circumstances locally are below average and have fallen since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, although some classes have a disproportionately high percentage of pupils with special needs. As numbers in specific age groups are often small, any comparison of pupils' achievement with national data must be treated with caution.

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 that has built effectively on its strengths since the last inspection. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and their achievement is good. Links with parents and the parish are strong, and all parents who expressed a view are very pleased with the care and learning support provided for their children. A number of parents wrote in praise of the school and their views are summarised in this comment: 'St Mary's is a supportive and caring school which has consistently provided a good education in a safe and secure setting.' The pupils also recognise the school's strengths. Members of the school council say that they feel very safe, enjoy their work, and value the trips and extra activities that the staff provide for them.

The school is well led and managed, guided well by its experienced headteacher. The staff support him well in creating an atmosphere of trust and high expectation founded in the school's Catholic mission. Governance is also good, and the chair and Parish Priest are very closely involved in supporting the school. The school is well placed to continue to improve.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is excellent because parents and staff work together to help pupils to reflect on important issues, and to follow moral and behavioural guidance with understanding. Cultural development is good and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils understand the diversity of world cultures because it has been woven into many aspects of learning. Their understanding is reflected in high quality displays of children's art work that is influenced by a wide variety of ethnic styles.

Pupils behave very well and have excellent attitudes to their learning. They concentrate well in lessons and work hard; their enjoyment is manifest. These positive attributes support their good progress strongly. Pupils act confidently on the messages from the school's focus on healthy lifestyles, recognised in its Healthy School award. They perform many jobs in class and round the school, and make an excellent contribution to the parish and local community, including distributing harvest gifts and collecting for charities. They are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 has improved steadily over the last three years to be above average. Standards in national tests vary in line with pupils' varying abilities. Inspection findings confirm the school's judgement that the standards reached by the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, with a good proportion reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils' progress is good across the school, and there has been particular success this year in the improvement of pupils' ability to write effectively in different styles and at length. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do those from minority ethnic groups.

Progress is good because teaching and the curriculum are good. Pupils are cared for very well, and support and guidance for them are good. The staff plan effectively to meet pupils' specific needs and generally mark their work helpfully. However, there is no effective summary record of the progress of each year group of pupils in order to monitor whether targets set have been achieved and to evaluate the school's overall performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good and the setting is well led. It is a safe environment, welcoming to children and their parents, and skilfully laid out indoors to support all the areas of learning. Children's levels of development when they start in the Reception class vary widely year-on-year as numbers are often small, but are generally below those typical for their age. The current Reception group is much larger than is usual for the school, and has made good progress from having broadly typical skills and understanding at entry to achieve above expected levels at transfer to Year 1. Children's early language and mathematical skills have progressed well. This is because the choice of activities planned for them have stimulated their learning well, encouraged their independence and promoted their all-round development. Unobtrusive adult support is also effective in challenging children to extend their skills. For example, a boy was encouraged to persevere for over thirty minutes to make an accurate model of a butterfly. There is good space outside that is used well, but this is not yet equipped effectively enough in line with new national guidance to fully support learning when outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the progress made by different year groups.
- Develop resources to support children's outside learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and compares well with that of pupils in similar circumstances. Progress is good across the school, evident in pupils' ongoing work, their confidence in lessons, and in test results. They improve well from entry to leaving, and the current Year 6 has developed from being below average at entry to the Reception class to achieving above average levels in English, mathematics and science. Standards have improved in Year 2 assessments this year to be above expected levels, with a good rise in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3. Able pupils are identified and provided with appropriate challenge, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support to make good progress towards their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. So is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In response to the school's strong promotion of progress and close co-operation with parents, pupils become confident and interested learners and are very well prepared for the future. They learn much about the importance of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. The school is a safe, happy and welcoming place, with pupils contributing considerably through their excellent, sensible and responsible behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning. Most pupils attend regularly and the overall rate of attendance is broadly average. Pupils contribute enormously to the community of the school by performing many important duties in and out of the classroom. Their involvement in many events out of school is much appreciated by the broader community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, leading to pupils making good progress in their learning. From the warm and focused learning support in Reception to the challenging and interesting approach for older pupils, the staff ensure that pupils make good progress year on year. Teamwork is good, with support staff giving effective help to individuals and groups of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils understand what their learning targets are, and increasingly check their own and other pupils' work. This is helping them to become more independent in their learning. Teachers' planning for learning is good. Marking is generally helpful in keeping pupils informed of their progress and what they need to do next, but the best examples are not consistently applied across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, meeting all statutory requirements, and being well enriched by visits and after-school activities. Whilst there is a major focus on the core subjects, other aspects of learning, especially history, art and physical education also feature strongly. The staff are skilled in threading the development of literacy skills across other subjects, as when Year 6 wrote imaginative Second World War accounts after a visit to air-raid shelters in Stockport. Information and communication technology is promoted well, and pupils also learn French and study French culture. Effective emphasis is given to learning through practical activities, such as in science and design and technology, which are valued and enjoyed by the pupils. The approach to personal, social and health education is thorough and effective.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for very well. In their personal development they are very skilfully guided and supported and this is strongly welcomed by parents. This is why pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. Academic guidance and support are good for individual pupils. Staff know the pupils well. They share information about pupils' progress and learning needs between themselves and with pupils and their parents on a daily basis. This is particularly helpful for pupils with specific learning needs. However, at the whole school level, records of each year group's progress towards the targets set for them are not clear enough for effective monitoring and evaluation of class or whole school performance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The headteacher sets the tone of high expectations and high standards, supported well by his deputy who also leads the teaching team effectively. Many staff have multiple leadership roles and make a good contribution to the outstanding outcomes in pupils' personal development and their good progress in learning. Pupils feel, and are, fully involved and valued in all the

school's activities. Governance is good. Governors are closely involved in the work of the school and hold it to account for raising standards and improving provision. Self-evaluation is good overall, but systems to monitor and evaluate the progress of groups of pupils are not sufficiently developed. The school has maintained and built on its strengths from the last inspection, and is well placed to continue to improve.

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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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 July 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Clayton-le-Moors, Lancashire, BB5 5RJ

Thank you for your kind and friendly welcome when I inspected your school a while ago. It was good to talk to you, and what you told me has helped me in making my decisions. Please also thank your parents for filling in the questionnaire and writing to me with their views.

You will remember that I came to see how well your school looks after you and helps you to learn. You and your parents told me that St Mary's is a good school, and I agree with you. The staff work hard to make sure that you are safe and happy, and that you make good progress in your learning. You also help them in this by behaving very well, and getting on with your work. In fact, I think that your personal development is excellent.

It was good to see the fantastic art work in the hall, and to observe how well you concentrate in lessons. This is because your headteacher and staff plan interesting things for you to do. I was impressed by your focused writing in the 'Big Write' sessions. These seem to have helped you make good progress in writing extended pieces of work and interesting stories and recounts.

Your staff are going to help you improve further by making sure that they know clearly how well you achieve the targets set for you, and what you need to do next. The school is also going to improve the outdoor learning area for Reception, so that many of the same activities can take place outside as much as inside.

You can help by checking whether you have learned what was expected and by continuing to concentrate well on your learning.

Thank you again for your welcome, and I wish all of you the best in your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Mr E Jackson

Lead inspector