

Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105337
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	324204
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	140
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr T Wright
Headteacher	Mrs D Kiernan
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rudgwick Drive Bury Lancashire BL8 1YA
Telephone number	0161 761 2026

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2008
Inspection number	324204

Fax number

0161 797 3542

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most and stands in extensive grounds in an area of average social and economic circumstances. The proportion entitled to a free school meal is below average but has increased over recent years. Although most pupils are of White British heritage, a very small minority speak English in addition to their home language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. A higher than normal proportion of pupils start or leave other than at the usual times. Over time, numbers have increased. Each class caters for two year groups. There is provision for children in the Reception year in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and a private provider offers pre- and after-school care on site. The school has gained the Healthy Schools award and the Football Association Kitemark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where excellent leadership, dedicated staff and governors successfully ensure that every child really matters. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support provided for them are outstanding. Inspection evidence verified the school's own judgements of its performance. Leadership's vision is firmly and successfully focused on improving outcomes for all pupils. The headteacher is the driving force in shaping the direction of the school. Parents described her as 'inspirational' and were overwhelmingly supportive of the school, saying their children are happy, progressing well and 'Skip to school each day.'

Achievement is good overall, although often pupils' progress in lessons is outstanding. Children's skills when they enter the school are broadly in line with those expected. The small numbers in each year group mean this can vary and an increasing proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress because they are taught consistently well and enjoy well planned lessons, based on a good curriculum, with an excellent range of enrichment activities. The inspection identified some excellent progress, particularly where teaching is dynamic and stimulating. By the time pupils leave Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics. In science by the end of Year 6 a majority of pupils reach the higher Level 5. The most recent teacher assessments in Year 2 show that staff training and better use of assessment information have successfully raised standards. In 2008 standards in reading and writing were significantly higher than average.

Pupils greatly enjoy school, saying 'It's really friendly', and that everyone looks after each other because 'We are all friends'. They have an excellent understanding of how to look after their health and are very proud of their Healthy Schools award. Attendance is above average. Behaviour is good overall and very good in lessons, making a significant contribution to progress. Pupils have a very strong community spirit, carry out responsibilities willingly and eagerly contribute to local and parish events. They express a strong and shared belief that everyone should live and work together, regardless of race or creed. They have a keen awareness of other faiths and the diversity of life in Britain and in the wider world and have active links with an orphanage in Africa. Good academic and outstanding personal skills are a good basis for future success.

Outstanding care ensures pupils feel safe and secure in school. They benefit academically and personally from the excellent relationships between home and school. Parents comment that their children are very well looked after and say staff are very welcoming and approachable. Excellent assessment systems ensure academic progress is monitored very thoroughly and staff are becoming increasingly skilled in using the information to plan challenging work.

Leadership is firmly focused on raising standards and achievement within a secure, happy and harmonious environment. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection and the issues raised have been successfully tackled. Value for money is good. Governors and staff are firmly committed and dedicated to enhancing and developing every aspect of the school within a secure and caring ethos. This dynamic and very effective team gives the school an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good leadership is continuously developing and enhancing existing good practice. Staff are fully committed to the children's well-being and development and have a good understanding of their individual needs. Achievement is good overall and children make excellent progress in their personal development. By the end of Reception, nearly all children exceed the expectations for their age as a result of good quality teaching and care. Excellent welfare arrangements ensure children feel safe and secure, happy and eager to learn. The good curriculum is well balanced between adult- and child-led activities. Children make a good start in early reading skills, quickly learning letter names as well as their sounds and soon become confident speakers. Practical investigations allow them to select and follow their interests, such as making and tasting biscuits. The 'learning journal' and assessment systems ensure children regularly experience activities in all areas of learning and staff check progress carefully. Children particularly enjoy working outside. However, the small outdoor area does not utilise the full potential of the school's extensive grounds to make this aspect of children's learning fully effective.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop outdoor provision in the EYFS.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Key Stage 2 are consistently above average. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils have recently exceeded their challenging targets. Almost all gained the expected level in English, mathematics and science and two thirds gained the higher level in science. Outcomes show evidence of some excellent and accelerating progress, also identified in pupils' books and some lessons. Rigorous actions halted a decline in standards at Key Stage 1. In 2008, pupils attained significantly higher than average standards in reading and writing and higher than average in mathematics. Progress has accelerated in all age groups as a result of more accurate assessment and closely targeted support for pupils. This has been aided by effective professional development and challenging performance management targets for staff. Pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to meet their challenging targets. Skilled support enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English an additional language to progress well. Pupils' reading and oral skills are strong throughout the school. Their wide vocabulary and use of structured sentences support their work in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils reflect quietly on moral issues during assemblies and 'circle time' and are especially caring and considerate towards others. They feel extremely safe in school, say there is no problem with bullying and talk knowledgeably of the 'Show racism the red card' project. Older pupils value their role as 'special friends' looking after Reception class children. Excellent relationships and trust in the staff support pupils' academic and personal progress most effectively. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and diet in a healthy lifestyle. Their contribution to the school, parish and local communities is very strong, for example, as school councillors, singing in church and

organising charity work. They relish activities shared with other schools, for example, at sports events. Behaviour is good. Pupils concentrate and cooperate well in lessons and mix very happily together outside. Pupils enjoy earning rewards and say school rules are fair. Attendance is good. The school works actively with parents to reduce absence. Pupils' cultural development is excellent. Good academic and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, along with strong personal and social development, prepare pupils effectively for the next steps in their education and for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils say, 'The teachers make learning fun for us,' and pupils know they are expected to work hard. Most lessons include interesting, practical learning activities, make good cross-curricular links and make effective use of skilled teaching assistants to support particular groups of learners. Staff use assessment well and provide carefully planned, challenging work that matches every pupil's needs. Consequently, they all make good progress, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those new to learning English. Most lessons move along at a lively pace, enable pupils to assess their own and others' work and make good use of all resources that stimulate and hold pupils' attention, so they progress rapidly. Teaching of the highest quality for the oldest pupils accelerates their progress to standards that are consistently above average. Just occasionally, teachers talk for a little too long and this means that pupils begin to lose concentration and have insufficient time to put their learning into practice. As a result, their progress slows slightly. Literacy and numeracy evenings enable parents to support their children's learning at home.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Excellent features in the way it is enriched and the range and variety of after-school clubs make a strong contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. Appropriate emphasis on literacy, numeracy, science and ICT, careful monitoring of the responses of different groups of pupils and suitably adapted work, ensure all pupils progress well. Staff are working to develop the curriculum by linking subjects, whilst ensuring key skills are fully covered, but this is at a relatively early stage. The curriculum makes an impressive contribution to pupils' personal development and equips them well for their future learning. Pupils speak highly of visitors and visits that enliven many subjects, for example, the Second World War bunkers in Stockport. Older pupils benefit greatly from the opportunity of a residential experience. The broad range of very well attended after-school clubs covers sports, gardening and the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding arrangements for care, guidance and support give pupils a very secure framework for their personal and academic progress. Pastoral arrangements are very strong. Many parents comment appreciatively on this valued aspect of the school's work. Staff are fully committed to ensure that 'every child matters' so that they flourish in this safe, secure atmosphere. All staff work closely in partnership with parents to ensure that they are fully involved with their

children's education. Strong liaison with all external support and welfare agencies is used very effectively to benefit pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current requirements.

Excellent assessment systems give staff a very clear picture of how well their pupils are progressing. This is particularly valuable in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is increasingly adept use of assessment information to set targets, plan challenging lessons and identify where to direct additional help in order to avoid any underachievement. Consequently, progress is accelerating and pupils work hard to meet and exceed their targets and relish challenges.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership which is recognised beyond the school. She receives excellent support from the deputy headteacher and governors, who form a dynamic, committed and dedicated team, supported fully by staff and parents. The school has gained a very good reputation locally. Well informed governors bring a range of expertise, are strongly supportive yet very challenging and manage the budget rigorously in order to sustain improvement. School self-evaluation is thorough and accurate. The school knows its strengths and sets challenging targets based on the outcomes of rigorous monitoring and detailed analysis. Consequently, actions for improvement are well directed and have resulted in teaching of a high quality, more effective assessment arrangements, better behaviour and improved outcomes for pupils especially in Key Stage 1. Community cohesion is promoted well through local and parish links, giving pupils a good awareness of diversity in the wider and global communities. The promotion of equal opportunities is first-rate so all pupils can participate fully in learning and other activities.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
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 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?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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**

Inspection of Our Lady of Lourdes Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury, Bury, BL8 1YA

I would like to thank you for making me welcome when I inspected your school. You were all very friendly, polite and helpful so I was able to complete all my work. You were really looking forward to the pantomimes; I hope you enjoyed them and had a lot of fun. This letter is to tell you what I found out about your school.

Our Lady of Lourdes is an outstanding school. You get off to a good start in the Reception class. You make good progress and reach higher standards than children in most other schools. This is because you have good teachers who make your lessons interesting. You said the teachers expect you to work hard, but always support and help you, so there is no pressure! You told me how much you enjoy everything you do at school, especially all the visits and clubs.

You certainly know how to look after your health and feel very safe in school. I was impressed by your good behaviour and by the way everyone looks after and tries to help others. You do a lot to help the church and I heard the choir practising to sing in church and I know you raise funds for charity.

You have an excellent headteacher, governors and school leaders. They make sure you receive outstanding care and guidance and are constantly working to make school even better. I have asked them to find ways of improving the outdoor area for the Reception children so they can enjoy even more learning outside in the fresh air.