

St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119511
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	327054
Inspection date	27 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	243
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 Glyn Hughes
Headteacher	Mrs Barbara Cuff
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Feilden Street Blackburn Lancashire BB2 1LQ
Telephone number	01254 580462

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	27 November 2008
Inspection number	327054

Fax number

01254 690389

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	27 November 2008
Inspection number	327054

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and the standards they reach, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and in Years 1 and 2; the quality of the teaching and learning and the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels, particularly in relation to monitoring the school's performance and self-evaluation. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, nationally published assessment data and the school's records of pupils' progress. Observations of break-time, lessons and the school's plans for further improvement were also undertaken. Discussions with pupils, staff and governors were held and questionnaires returned by parents were considered. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The majority of the pupils at this average sized school are from White British heritage. The school is situated within Blackburn town centre, serving a community that includes an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, mainly of Asian and Polish heritage, is above average. The proportion of pupils, who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language, is above average, and increasing. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school makes provision in its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) for Nursery and Reception aged children. Provision is also made on site for before- and after-school care, which is managed by a private provider. The school has been accredited with the Artsmark Gold, Activemark and Eco Schools Bronze Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness and provides good value for money. Some aspects are outstanding, such as the pastoral care and support that is offered to the pupils and their families, the way in which every child is fully included in all that is on offer, and the way in which the curriculum is enriched. Extensive partnerships fostered beyond the school, such as with support agencies, the before and after-school club, the church, and with parents, all make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Parents are confident that their children receive a good education in a 'very warm, caring and family environment'. They particularly appreciate the high level of commitment to meeting the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or additional social, emotional and medical needs.

Children's learning gets off to a successful start in the EYFS. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those that speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their very low starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average. This reflects the good quality of teaching and learning and an effective curriculum. Enthusiastic teaching, positive relationships, careful and sensitive deployment of skilled support staff, along with a good range of individualised learning programmes, all contribute well to pupils' good achievement. Pupils' progress accelerates between Years 3 to 6 because they enjoy many practical and lively activities and have good opportunities to talk about them. Weaknesses in the language skills of younger pupils, however, sometimes restrict the pace of their learning. The school is aware that there is scope for extending opportunities for developing pupils' ability to speak and understand English, particularly for the increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. At present, however, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to quickly acquire vital language skills. Although standards by the end of Year 2 have improved, they remain below average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is broadly average. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Behaviour is good and pupils show mature and sensible attitudes to learning and speak knowledgeably about how to keep safe and healthy. Pupils are confident that, if they have any concerns, there is always someone on hand to help. They say that they enjoy school, particularly taking part in the outstanding range of additional activities, such as clubs, trips and welcoming visitors. Pupils of all ages make a good contribution towards their school and local community. They talk with enthusiasm about looking after their school environment, such as being members of the 'muddy club', and raising funds to help other communities around the world. These good personal qualities provide an encouraging platform upon which to improve their academic achievement even further. They prepare pupils well to become confident young adults of tomorrow.

Pupils' good academic achievement and personal development are the result of good quality leadership, management and governance. The headteacher's enthusiasm for ensuring that each pupil can achieve well in a very safe, warm and inclusive setting is highly evident. She, along with her staff and governors, works tirelessly to ensure that the limitations of the building, such as cramped classrooms, do not hamper pupils' achievements. Furthermore, despite recent instabilities in staffing including many changes within the senior leadership team, governors and changes of roles and responsibilities, the school has improved at a good rate. This reflects the commitment and dedication of staff. A clear structure for leadership and management is now firmly in place. Staff and governors have taken on their new roles with enthusiasm. Their

skills, particularly in reviewing the school's performance, monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision, however are still developing. Consequently, they are not yet playing a full role in the school's self-evaluation and driving through improvements. Nevertheless, the good improvement since the previous inspection gives the school a good platform upon which to build even further in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in the Nursery, their skills are much lower than is typical for their age. Aspects of children's personal, social and emotional skills, along with communication, language and literacy skills are often notably weak. Effective systems for introducing children and their parents into school ensure that learning gets off to a successful start. Staff know children well and this helps them to provide sensitive and appropriate support at the right time. Positive relationships and effective targeted support boost children's learning and give them the confidence they need to make good progress. As a result, children are happy and safe, behave well and quickly discover that learning is fun. Lively and enthusiastic teachers and support staff work effectively together to ensure the activities are interesting and imaginative. By the time children start Year 1, although standards are below average, their skills have improved at a good rate. Even so, the majority are yet to reach the learning goals set nationally, and their weak communication, language and literacy skills remain as a barrier to their learning. Leadership and management are good and staff are aware of the need to focus on improving communication skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress in learning to speak and understand English, particularly in the EYFS and Years 1 and 2.
- Extend the skills of leaders, managers and governors, so that they contribute fully to self-evaluation and school improvement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	3
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?	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
The extent to which 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	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?	2

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 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	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**

28 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Anne's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn, Blackburn with Darwen, BB2 1LQ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you. You were all really keen to talk to us and answered our questions considerately and respectfully. Your behaviour was good and you showed us how mature and sensible you are. Pupils in Year 6, for example, worked very successfully together preparing for a live radio broadcast. All the adults in your school care a great deal about every one of you. They always make sure that you all can be included in everything that happens. You are also kind and caring towards one another. It was good to see how well you all play and learn together. You get lots of chances to make your school community a happier, safer and healthier place to be, such as being school council representatives or being members of the 'muddy club'. You attend a particularly impressive range of clubs, and enjoy many trips and visitors to your school. Many of you told me that these are part of the reason why you enjoy school so much. I was also pleased to find out just how much you know about people less fortunate than yourselves, and how you are keen to raise funds to help them.

Your parents told me just how pleased they are that you attend St Anne's. This is because your school is a good school. The standards you reach at the end of Year 6 are similar to those expected and you make good progress especially between Years 3 and 6. Your good progress and good attitudes to learning are why you are well placed to succeed when you go to secondary school. There are, however, some things that could be even better. This is why I have asked the school to make sure that:

you have more chances to develop your talking skills, particularly in the Nursery, Reception and in Years 1 and 2

adults with special management responsibilities play a bigger part in checking that you are all doing as well as you should be.

You can help your school by making sure that you always check what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. Of course, you should continue to try your best in everything that you do.

My very best wishes to you all for a bright and successful future!

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector