

# St Mary's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119513
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	327055
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Herring

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.

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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 (total)	212
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Father Francis Parkinson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Andrea Thomson (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bennington Street Blackburn Lancashire BB2 3HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 698301
<b>Fax number</b>	01254 698307

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- standards in English in Key Stage 2
- the achievement of more able pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 1
- the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from performance data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, the work produced by pupils, parents' questionnaires and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector found that most of the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation form were justified and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

St Mary's and St Joseph's is a smaller than average primary school serving an area of significant social deprivation. Approximately a third of pupils are from a White British background and two thirds are from minority ethnic groups. More than half of the pupils do not have English as their first language, and a significant number of these children have little English on entry to the reception class. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school provides education for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

## 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 and some aspects of its work are outstanding. The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for pupils, and their personal development is excellent. The school has adapted very well to the changing population it serves. Whilst retaining its clear Catholic identity and ethos it is embracing the wealth of cultures in the school and the wider community, working together with those of other faiths. Pupils show a great respect for each other's beliefs and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. One parent said she chose this school rather than one nearer to home because of the way children of different faiths and cultures work and play so well together.

Pupils readily embrace a healthy lifestyle through vigorous exercise in the many sporting activities on offer and benefit from the healthy lunches provided. Some parents expressed a concern that the range of food on offer was limited, but inspection evidence does not support this. The menus clearly show a daily choice of meat, vegetarian and Halal food, which pupils appreciate. Pupils say they feel safe and are secure in the knowledge that they can approach an adult or leave a message in the worry box should they need help with a problem. Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy coming to school and join in well with the wide range of additional activities. They make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community as school councillors, play leaders and as Eco warriors, and are well prepared for the future.

Achievement is good and standards are broadly average. Pupils start in Reception with a range of skills that are generally below what is usual for their age and they make good progress during their time in school. In the 2007 national assessments in Key Stage 1, standards were broadly average and pupils achieved well. The introduction of a very structured approach to teaching basic mathematical skills in Year 2 resulted in all the pupils reaching the expected level. However, as opportunities to use these skills in investigating and solving problems are limited, fewer pupils than average reach the higher level. Assessments for 2008 show a similar picture, though improvements in the teaching of phonics resulted in a good increase in the number of pupils achieving the higher level in reading.

In the 2007 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, standards were broadly average and pupils achieved well overall. However, there was a comparative weakness in English, particularly writing. The provisional results for 2008 show a similar picture. The school's initiatives to increase writing skills led to some improvement, particularly for the more able pupils. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level for their age in English is below average. The school's assessments for pupils now in Year 6 indicate they are on line to achieve their targets.

Teaching is good and so pupils learn well. There is a very good level of skilled support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English so that they make good progress and achieve well. In most lessons work is well planned to match the needs of different groups and they learn at a good rate. In a few lessons however, all pupils are given the same workbook task and this restricts the learning of more able pupils.

The school takes excellent care of its pupils and all the recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are firmly in place and rigorously applied. The Breakfast Club and the Teatime Club extend this care before and after school. There are very good procedures for tracking pupils' progress and these are used very effectively to identify difficulties and provide

support at an early stage. Pupils receive very good guidance to help them improve through effective marking and individual targets which are regularly reviewed.

The good curriculum is broad and balanced. There is appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons and in other subjects. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is used effectively to enhance learning. A strong aspect of the provision is the extensive range of lunchtime and after-school clubs, including specialist coaching, to promote learning and enjoyment. Many visits, including a residential visit for older pupils, enhance learning opportunities. The good programme of personal, social and health education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development.

Leadership and management are good. The Acting Headteacher, ably supported by the Senior Leadership Team, has sustained the momentum for improvement during the current secondment of the headteacher. The school evaluates its work accurately and uses this information to bring about improvements. For example, an increased emphasis on speaking and listening is helping to improve reading skills. Extensive efforts to improve writing are having a more gradual impact, though the provisional results of the 2008 national tests are encouraging. The commitment to a high level of individual care ensures pupils with very diverse needs and backgrounds receive the support they need to help them to make good progress. The school has excellent links with other professionals to get specialist support for pupils where needed. Governance is good. Governors work well to ensure that the school works in harmony with others. Improvements in standards and in the EYFS show the school has a good capacity to improve. It provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is outstanding.

Children enter school with a range of skills that are generally below what is usual for their age and the language and social skills of many children are well below what can be expected. The number of children entering the school speaking very little English is increasing. The high level of care and support, including bilingual support, and the warm, welcoming atmosphere help all children to settle quickly. A high emphasis is rightly placed on developing children's personal and social skills and they make excellent progress to achieve the recommended goal by the end of Reception. Adults take time to demonstrate and explain the rules and routines so children quickly begin to tidy away equipment they have used and know to sit on the carpet for certain activities. There is suitable provision for children in EYFS in The Teatime Club, though no child from Reception attends at present.

Staff take every opportunity to talk with the children, whatever the activity, and so children are developing their language skills well. Teaching is outstanding and as a consequence children make rapid progress in their learning. All tasks are suitably based on interesting and purposeful, practical activities which engage children's attention and show an excellent understanding of how young children learn. This was seen when the teacher asked the children to look at plastic shapes and find similar shapes in everyday objects. There is a good balance between activities which are led by an adult and those which children choose, providing a very broad range of experiences and clear enjoyment throughout the day.

The EYFS is led and managed very well. Assessment procedures are comprehensive and the information is used effectively to plan for children's individual needs. Consequently, children

achieve as well as they can. Nevertheless, overall standards are slightly below the expected level for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

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

- Provide further challenge for more able pupils in mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Explore ways to enable more pupils to reach the expected level for their age in writing by the time they leave the school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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

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**Annex B**

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

14 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's and St Joseph's Roman Catholic Primary School Blackburn, BB2 3HP

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to your views. I agree with you that St Mary's and St Joseph's is a good school, in fact some of the things about it are outstanding. Your own personal development is excellent. I was particularly impressed by the way you all get on so well together and respect each other's beliefs. The school takes excellent care of you and you told me how much you appreciate being able to put a note in the Worry Box to get help if you have a concern.

Lessons are interesting and so you are learning well and making good progress. Teachers explain things carefully so that you can get on with your work and there is always an adult to give you extra help when needed. You play your part by working hard and behaving well. By the time you leave to go to the High School most of you are working at the expected level for your age in mathematics and science and standards in English are improving.

Children in Reception have an excellent start to school. They have settled quickly and are learning very well. When I visited their room they were all trying hard and really enjoying their work.

When I inspect a school it is part of my job to suggest ways that even a good school could improve. I have suggested two things.

- Give more challenging activities in mathematics to those children in Key Stage 1 who work more quickly.
- Find ways to help more pupils to reach Level 4 in writing by the time they leave Year 6.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring

Lead inspector