

St Augustines Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119607
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327084
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Tony Painter

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)	242
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 David Cox
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Pye
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Austins Place Preston Lancashire PR1 3YJ
Telephone number	01772 253851

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Inspection number	327084

Fax number

01772 821035

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of the school's actions to remedy recent falls in its national assessment results at ages seven and eleven.
- How well the school ensures that all pupils make good progress and achieve equally well.
- The extent to which teachers use assessment information to plan work matched to pupils' needs.
- Whether the school's evaluation of outstanding personal development and well-being is accurate.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation documents, national published assessment data, the school's records and procedures, observation of the school at work and discussions with pupils, staff and governors. Parents' views as reflected in the Ofsted questionnaire were considered.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a local community that includes an area with very high social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, primarily of Indian and Pakistani heritage, although only a few are at an early stage of learning English. Around a third of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around the national average. However, the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average for the size of the school. The school holds several awards, including the Investors in People award. It has also recently been accredited with the Financial Management Standards in Schools award.

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 very effectively ensures all pupils enjoy their education. Their enthusiasm for lessons and their regard for their teachers shows in the excited and confident way pupils describe their work. The vast majority of parents are extremely supportive of the school's positive atmosphere. Care for pupils is very thorough and steps taken to ensure their safety fully meet statutory requirements. Pupils enthusiastically take responsibilities within the school, showing great pride in their actions and achievements. Excellent personal development is clearly reflected in pupils' confident manner, their tolerance of difference and the way pupils of different backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development gives a very secure foundation for each pupil's future life. This makes a very strong contribution to community cohesion within the school and gives pupils an excellent awareness of their role as responsible citizens.

Children begin school with limited personal development but all staff successfully establish very positive relationships to build this through the school. As a result, pupils have extremely good knowledge of how to keep safe and healthy. They are very positive about the way 'everyone is treated equally' and the respect which staff and pupils have for each other. They say that bullying is 'very rare' but all are extremely clear about what to do if there were any problems. They express strong confidence in all staff to resolve any conflict quickly and fairly. Despite these outstanding positive attitudes, attendance remains below average. Some, but not all of this, results from extended term time holidays and it is clear that excessive absence restricts some pupils' progress. The school continues to take steps to encourage parents to ensure their children attend well and there are signs of some improvements. Recent attendance is above the similar period last year but there is still some way to go to reach average levels and ensure all pupils get full benefit from what the school has to offer.

Pupils' attainment on joining Year 1 is below average. All pupils make good progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 so that standards by the time they leave the school are just above average. This represents good achievement from these pupils' starting points. However, in 2008, the national assessment results in both Key Stages were below those generally reached by the school in recent years. Year 2 pupils' results were adversely affected by significant staffing problems. This slowed the pace of learning, but the school has taken effective action. These pupils' continuing progress is being carefully tracked to ensure they catch up their lost ground. Staffing is now stable and current pupils' progress is good. The 2008 Year 6 pupils had many academic, social and behavioural needs that had restricted their progress over time. Although pupils reached, and sometimes exceeded, their appropriately challenging targets, their overall attainment was broadly average. Current Year 6 pupils are performing at a higher level, just above the national average. They are on track to exceed their individual targets and the school is justifiably confident that 2009 results will be in line with those reached in past years. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good; their needs are quickly and accurately identified, ensuring that they make as good progress as other pupils. The language needs of pupils who are new to English are carefully and accurately assessed. Good provision is made in classes and through specialist support to give these pupils full access to opportunities to learn well.

The good progress that pupils make reflects consistently effective teaching and the wide range of appropriate activities they are given. Pupils are very enthusiastic about what they learn and are appreciative of the way teachers help them. They point out how well they do when, as is

so often the case, they are given lots of 'making and doing' activities. The school has widened the curriculum effectively, with a strong focus on expanding pupils' experiences. In the recent 'multicultural week' for example, pupils investigated the lives and cultures of different countries, including artwork, dance and role-play. Pupils' experiences are also enhanced by the many visitors and opportunities to learn outside the school.

Throughout the school, teachers have extremely good relationships with pupils and effective strategies to maintain a purposeful learning environment. These capture pupils' attention, give them confidence and ensure a good pace to learning. As a result, pupils behave well and show real interest in their work. Teachers make effective use of new school strategies to help pupils, including clear identification of what they will learn in each lesson. A greater emphasis on discussion, by sharing ideas with 'talk partners', is successfully encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills. Teachers effectively use their good personal knowledge of pupils to group those with different needs within the classes and sometimes across a year group. Planning consistently provides for pupils of different abilities, making use of the detailed assessments and tracking of progress. Effective marking means pupils know what they need to do to improve. A wide range of extra or alternative approaches addresses any such concerns, including some work targeted at more able pupils. This is having some success; the proportions of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment are rising. However, teachers do not always make full use of assessment information to plan tasks that consistently challenge higher attaining pupils.

Good leadership and management have ensured the school's actions to tackle lower results have been very well managed. Accurate and perceptive self-evaluation is derived from a rigorous programme of monitoring to complement the assessment and tracking system. The headteacher makes particularly effective use of assessment and tracking data to analyse and evaluate any variations in the performances of different groups of pupils. She uses this information in a comprehensive approach to professional and performance management. Effective self-evaluation extends to good analysis of the school's excellent contribution to promoting community cohesion. Analysis demonstrates very good understanding of the action needed at school, local and wider levels. Very positive relationships have been established with local mosques and the school maintains strong links with the local Catholic parish. Pupils have frequent opportunities to engage with, contribute to and understand wider communities. For example, they give regular and sustained support to the local charity for homeless people. The governing body is closely involved with the school. Governors work together effectively and play a part in holding the school to account through regular working party and school development meetings. Effective joint working with staff ensures the right priorities for the school are identified and set out in the improvement planning, with appropriate responsibilities allocated. The success of recent action in improving provision and maintaining the positive progress of pupils in challenging circumstances suggests that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision is good and it is led and managed well. Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning, but by the time they enter Year 1 their attainment is still below average. Children's welfare is a priority. Positive induction arrangements and very good relationships ensure children get off to a good start. Although there is no key worker system allocating children to specific staff, the staff quickly get to know each individual child. By using careful observation procedures and good assessment arrangements, they add to this knowledge and

establish a clear picture of how each child is doing. As a result, any additional learning needs are quickly identified and appropriate support provided to ensure good progress. All the children respond well to the good use of personal targets, which are relevant to their levels of development. A wide range of well planned activities, both indoors and outside, reflect a good balance between tasks led by adults and those where children make their own choices. Frequently, the tasks are tailored effectively to the specific needs of groups of children and, as a result, children are well motivated and learn well. Children of all abilities develop greater independence and more confidently make sensible choices about their activities. Children enjoy new friendships and play and learn well together, particularly in practical activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure teachers make use of assessment information to plan work that consistently challenges higher attaining pupils.
- Take concerted action to raise attendance levels.

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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 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	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	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	1

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	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

2 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Augustine's Catholic Primary School, Lancashire, PR1 3YJ

Thank you very much for the extremely warm welcome you gave to me and Mrs Herring when we inspected your school. We were impressed by how keen you all were to tell us all about your school and the work you were doing. We were also pleased to read all the comments from the questionnaires that your parents sent us, please thank them for us.

You told us that you think your school is good and teachers are very approachable, and we agree with you. All the staff take good care of you and that helps you to feel safe and gives you the confidence to try hard. We could tell that you really enjoy everything that you learn. Teachers give you a good range of experiences in lessons, including the practical work that you say you particularly enjoy. Their good teaching helps you to improve your work well all through the school. Teachers already make a good job of checking how well you are doing and planning work that helps you to improve. I have asked the school to go a bit further to make sure that those of you that find learning easiest are given tasks that will challenge you to do your very best work. I know how you enjoy a challenge so I think this will be good for you all!

Although you really enjoy school, some of your parents still do not ensure you attend regularly enough. Taking a lot of time off, for long holidays or other reasons, gets in the way of your learning. I have asked the school to go further in encouraging all of your parents or carers to make sure that you take as little time off as possible.

Thank you again for showing me your school. I wish you and your families the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Tony Painter

Lead inspector