

# St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Longton

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119637
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327095
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Stafford

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)	231
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>	Mr Ed Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Bernadette Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2006
<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>	Chapel Lane Longton Preston Lancashire PR4 5EB

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327095

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school is situated in a semi-rural area to the west of Preston. The pupils come from a wide area surrounding the school and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is very low. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. There are a small number who come from minority ethnic heritages and a small number who are acquiring English as an additional language. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and a very small number have a statement of special educational needs.

## 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 which strongly develops pupils' personal skills and self-confidence. As one parent commented, 'Both of my children are extremely happy at St Oswald's ... in a safe, happy and caring environment'. Academic standards also improve well as pupils move through the school because all pupils are challenged effectively in lessons.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers engage pupils in a range of interesting independent and group activities. Teachers know pupils well and make good efforts to match work to the needs of pupils with different abilities. However, their use of assessment information is not always sharp enough to ensure that all pupils, particularly the most able, make the very best progress they can in every lesson. Teachers miss some opportunities for pupils to extend and apply their skills by writing at length in different subjects. Academic guidance, though, is good and ensures that pupils know and act upon their challenging targets. Marking is clearly focused on telling pupils what they should do to improve.

The curriculum is good. It is based on pupils' interests and its success is clear in the strong enjoyment they demonstrate for learning. It is enhanced by a good range of activities and visits to promote learning and pupils' understanding of communities at both local and global levels. Pupils participate successfully in many local festivals and projects.

The school uses data rigorously to establish a clear understanding of the levels at which pupils are working and to subsequently establish clearly where additional support may be required. This contributes to their good achievement. Good quality support for those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables these pupils to make good progress. In 2007, pupils attained above average overall standards by the end of Year 6. This represented good progress, considering their average starting points on joining the school. Inspection evidence and unvalidated results for 2008 show that standards remain above average and that pupils continue to make good progress.

Good quality care and support from a very caring staff successfully promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Behaviour is very good and attitudes to learning are strong. Pupils show commendable self-confidence and concern for one another. They enjoy the school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. They readily take on responsibilities. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit as the school strongly promotes these qualities. Pupils develop effective life skills as they move through the school because of the variety of quality experiences they receive. Above average standards mean the preparation for their future economic well-being is good.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established clear priorities for school improvement that are focused on raising standards in school. Subject leaders, teachers and the team of teaching assistants work well together to carefully plan the curriculum and learning activities. The school offers good value for money and its past successes confirm that it has good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Very positive relationships and a welcoming environment ensure children settle quickly into the Reception class. Before joining the school, children have had a wide range of prior experiences and development although

their attainment overall on entry is similar to that found nationally at this age. They make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of the good care and support they receive, and good teaching. In particular, they soon show good understanding of how to behave, learn and play together, thoroughly enjoying their first taste of school. As a result of their positive progress, they achieve well. Although overall levels of development remain broadly average, the proportion of children reaching or exceeding the expected levels of attainment increases by the time children join Year 1.

Effective leadership ensures that good use is made of thorough assessment systems to check how well children are doing and identify the next steps in learning. Focused activities for small groups of children are often very effective. However, assessment information is not consistently used to extend the learning of the most able children. Well established routines ensure time is used well and give children confidence, which is clearly seen in their willing answers to adults' careful questioning. Teaching is frequently enthusiastic and carefully planned links between activities ensure children take great pleasure in their learning. Resources are well organised and children have good opportunities to gain independence as they explore through play outside and in the classroom. There is a good balance between activities led by staff and those that children choose for themselves. When combined with the very good care, this ensures that children do well in their personal development.

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

- Make rigorous use of assessment information when planning lessons to increase progress, particularly of higher attaining pupils.
- Extend the opportunities for writing across the curriculum to further raise standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils' achievement is good. Progress is good in both key stages although it is strongest in Years 5 and 6 because of the more challenging work set for pupils. The improving standards are reflected in the school's results in national tests and assessments in both Years 2 and 6. Throughout the school an increasing proportion of pupils exceed their challenging targets and reach standards that are above the national averages. Results in the 2007 Year 6 tests continued the upward trend in overall standards and exceeded the national averages in all subjects. School data for 2008, and also inspection evidence, indicate that standards continue to be above average and that pupils are making good progress. Performance at the higher levels in writing, though good, is not as strong as for reading, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of effective intervention to meet their needs. The needs of the small number of pupils acquiring English as an additional language are identified accurately and met effectively, making their progress good.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show good levels of self-confidence and very positive attitudes. For example, they explained how they enjoy all aspects of their learning and welcome challenges. Their attendance remains above the national average. They show good levels of respect for others and empathy for their experiences. They appreciate cultural diversity and have a good

understanding of the different beliefs and backgrounds of people in the local and wider communities. They show a good understanding of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, taking regular exercise and eating sensibly, which has been reflected in the school's Healthy Schools Award. Pupils say they feel safe in school; they understand how to look after themselves and where to report any concerns about the behaviour of others. Behaviour is good overall and there is a safe and harmonious atmosphere in the school. Only rarely, when the pace of lessons slows, do some pupils become restless.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as serving on the school council, and are proud of the differences they see they can make in the school. Their desire for a 'greener' school, for example, has led to positive action and a silver Eco Award. By the time they leave the school, pupils are well prepared in their academic and personal development for the next stages of their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan effectively for lessons to include a range of tasks which pupils enjoy, and consequently, learning is made good fun. Teachers use questions well to ascertain what pupils understand and what they have learned. Particularly effective is the way teachers encourage pupils through supportive marking, and through discussing and identifying their individual learning needs. As a result, their needs are addressed effectively.

Relationships and attitudes are good, so that pupils become actively engaged in their learning. Learning is developed systematically and many pupils display increasingly independent learning skills. Pupils concentrate well on all activities and support one another well with their learning. On some occasions, however, teachers do not use assessment information well enough in their planning. This, and teachers spending too long talking, slows the pace of learning and prevents pupils practising skills for themselves. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop their information and communication technology skills although teachers do not use interactive whiteboard technology widely to support learning. Work for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well matched to their needs and, allied to the deployment of good teaching assistants, helps these pupils to also make good progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a wide range of activities and makes good use of national and local guidance in effectively reviewing and improving provision. Increasing links between pupils' learning in different subjects contribute well to their enjoyment and understanding. Since the last inspection, positive measures to improve the promotion of pupils' writing have been introduced that are beginning to show successes. However, teachers do not always make full use of opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects, thus missing chances to extend and apply their skills.

The school has widened the range and effectiveness of pupils' learning by holding special themed weeks and introducing some specialist teaching, including music and French. Teachers make good use of the school grounds and the local area to contribute relevance and immediacy

to pupils' learning. A good range of visits and visitors to the school extends pupils' horizons and widens their experiences. After-school clubs are well supported and add to the development of pupils' talents and their social skills.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school ensures good care for its pupils, which parents greatly appreciate. Many made specific comments about the positive nature of the links with parents and their confidence in the school. Rigorous safeguarding and child protection procedures fully meet requirements. Members of staff are consistently caring and know their pupils well. Teachers set individual and class targets, which are generally regularly reviewed. As a result, pupils know and understand their targets and what they need to improve. There are extremely thorough and accurate systems to check the progress of pupils through the school and inform the school's planning. Very good analysis of the relative performance of different groups and individuals ensures support is well targeted at the identified needs, ensuring good equality of opportunity. This early identification of needs and the timely support they receive ensure pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, ably supported by the senior leadership team, has put in place systems that have improved standards and achievement. She has established and developed a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and focused effectively on the right key priorities. Leaders at all levels work increasingly well together to plan the curriculum and learning activities. Their monitoring and evaluation role is developing strongly and the impact can be seen in the improved curriculum and rising standards. Targets set have been consistently challenging, and have contributed to standards rising, especially for boys and the most able pupils. There is a strong commitment to community cohesion at a local and global level. The school has undertaken a clear analysis of the needs of its learners and the range of communities associated with the school. Learners have regular opportunities to engage both with the local community and others with different backgrounds. An understanding of the wider and global communities is encouraged through a wide range of curriculum activities. Governance is good because it offers strong support to the school and contributes well to the school's drive to improve standards. The overwhelming majority of parents are hugely supportive of the work of the school, the high quality of care it brings for the social and personal needs of their children and its success in making learning fun. The school has improved considerably since the previous inspection.



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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 <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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>	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	2
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

<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?	2

## 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?	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**

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Catholic Primary School, Longton, PR4 5EB

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us feel welcome when we inspected your school. St Oswald's Primary is a good school that develops your personal skills and self-confidence well. The staff care for you extremely well. They help you to enjoy your learning because they make your lessons good fun and arrange many exciting activities for you to do.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and always do your best. You come to school very regularly, care for one another in the playground and behave very well. You are very polite and helpful, and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you enjoy your lessons and that you like your teachers. You said that you appreciated the activities the school provides for you, such as the clubs, sporting and musical activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way in which your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning. Children in Reception have a good start to their school life.

As a result of all these positive features, the large majority of you make good progress and achieve above average standards. We think this is because your teachers mostly give you work that is hard enough and most of you learn as much as you should.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school better.

- Make sure that they use information from their assessments to set work in class that is hard enough so that you do as well as you should.
- Make sure that you are given lots of opportunities to write when you are studying all subjects so that you get better at writing.

You can help by continuing to do your very best. I am sure you will.

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector