

Our Lady and St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lostock Hall

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119639
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327097
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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)	259
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 Kevin Lyth
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Malone
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lourdes Avenue Lostock Hall Preston Lancashire PR5 5TB
Telephone number	01772 335025

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2008
Inspection number	327097

Fax number

01772 629561

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision and a pre-school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average; the number of pupils who receive free school meals is well below average.

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. The headteacher manages the school well and has provided clear direction leading to good improvement since the last inspection. Supported by a highly skilled senior management team the headteacher ensures that pupils receive consistently good teaching, a stimulating and creative curriculum and high levels of care and support. The results of this are reflected in the views of the majority of parents and carers. The comments of one family reflect those of the majority. 'We feel the children are receiving a good education. The school has made the children's life a happy one which is very important to us.'

Achievement is good. Children enter Reception with attainment which, although it varies from year-to-year, is usually just below that which is typical for their ages. They make good progress in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. However, tasks are not always sufficiently challenging and more pupils could reach the higher levels. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Assessment systems to track pupils' progress have been very effective in spotting when pupils have fallen behind in their learning and need extra help. However, senior managers have not used them well enough in Key Stage 1 to identify higher attaining pupils and provide them with extra challenge. Neither have the systems provided senior managers with an overview on how the school is progressing against national expectations.

Pupils behave well and show a good understanding of how to be healthy, keep themselves safe and become responsible members of their own and the wider community. They relish the many real responsibilities their teachers give them, such as helping to choose the new reading books and planning the new classrooms.

Lessons are full of warm relaxed relationships and high expectations of behaviour and attitudes. However, not all teachers provide pupils with enough help on how to improve their work and some pupils are unclear about the purpose of their targets. The well planned curriculum, including the opportunity to learn French and play a musical instrument, along with the emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), ensures pupils are well equipped to be successful adults.

The pastoral care of pupils is very good. The school's welcoming atmosphere together with the concern for individuals shown by staff, ensures that pupils feel safe, valued and looked after and this helps them to grow in their self-esteem and confidence.

The headteacher, staff and governors accurately judge the school's strengths and weaknesses and know what needs to be done to ensure continued improvement. The success of these actions also shows that the school has good potential to make further improvements. It offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start in the Reception class with levels of development which vary but are generally just below those expected for their ages especially in personal and social development. Good teaching and the extra attention given to pupils' personal skills enable them to make good progress. As a result, a significant number of children achieve the goals expected of them by the end of the Reception year but few exceed them.

The staff work well as a team to ensure children's care and welfare. Children are helped to become familiar with everyday routines and very quickly feel secure and begin to enjoy their learning and develop independence. After only a short time in school they are eager to accept responsibility for simple tasks and remember routines well.

Children have lots of opportunities to work with adults, in groups and individually. Well planned tasks appeal to children's interests and make learning fun and exciting. Activities are carefully explained to the children and they are encouraged to talk about what they will do or suggest ideas of their own. Special activities are planned for the outdoor area in role play, for example, the airport, and for different areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use assessment systems to identify and provide for pupils needing more challenge and to gain an overview of how well the school is doing in relation to national standards.
- Ensure all pupils understand their targets and know how to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average and achievement is good. The good start pupils receive in the Reception class continues in Key Stage 1. In the 2007 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 standards were broadly average and most pupils had made good progress from their starting points. Provisional results for 2008 are not as strong as the previous year because this was a lower attaining group of pupils. However, inspection evidence indicates that more pupils could have achieved the higher levels.

Progress accelerates further in Key Stage 2. In the 2007 national tests for 11-year-olds, standards in reading, mathematics and science were above average, and in writing they were just below average. In the latest provisional results for 2008, standards were higher and pupils achieved well. Almost every pupil has reached the expected level in reading, mathematics and science; three quarters of them have reached the higher levels in reading and science and half in mathematics. Although standards are not as high in writing as in other subjects they have improved and are now average. Current standards across the school show that pupils are making good progress in all subjects including writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and reach their individual targets. The very few pupils for whom English is an additional language make similarly good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils have a positive approach to learning which is reflected in their regular attendance. They say they enjoy learning, feel safe and secure, and that bullying is rare. Pupils are proud to be members of the very effective school council which played an important role in choosing colour schemes and furniture for the new part of the school. Pupils learn the importance of keeping healthy and having a healthy diet, and they value the range of sporting activities including fencing and judo. A feature of the school is the way pupils are encouraged to think of others both in school and the wider world. Older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime. The whole school raises money to support local charities, and sends clothes and

toys to children who are the victims of natural disasters. These activities are helping to develop pupils' awareness of what it means to be responsible citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. All teachers have good strategies to promote positive attitudes to learning. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils are eager learners who enjoy their lessons. Teachers provide a range of interesting activities and make good use of high quality resources. These include very regular use of ICT, stimulating reading materials and challenging games which keep pupils on their toes and involved in their own learning. Lessons in Key Stage 1 have lots of practical, first hand activities to meet the needs of young learners. However, some tasks are not sufficiently challenging for higher attainers who do not always achieve as well as they could. Exceptionally well qualified teaching assistants provide very good support to pupils in lessons ensuring they make good progress in their work. Marking and the use of targets are not used consistently in helping pupils to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. A good programme of social and health education provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living. The school's use of the national programme for teaching literacy is effective and has had a positive impact on progress especially in improving standards in writing. In many lessons ICT supports learning very effectively and challenges and enriches pupils' learning. Pupils will be seen using their ICT skills to support and extend their learning in other subjects. A wide range of additional experiences is provided through visits, theme days and visitors, to broaden pupils' horizons. For example, learning to play the flute, confidently speaking French to a visitor, and visits to an outdoor activity centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are in line with statutory requirements. Parents raised some concerns about pupils' safety and these have been addressed by the governors. This is typical of the school and as a result, relationships with parents and carers are positive. They speak very warmly of the care and support provided by the school for the most vulnerable children. Good links with the pre-school ensure that children settle quickly into the Reception class. A close partnership with the secondary schools contributes towards preparing pupils for their future education. The support pupils receive to help them improve their work is inconsistent across the school. Many pupils are unclear about the purpose of their targets, and marking is not always as helpful as it could be in identifying what pupils need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher has developed a strong leadership team and is determined to ensure that the school equips pupils well for the challenges of the future. Working with the local authority, diocese and a range of other partners, leadership has improved all aspects of the school since the last inspection. All staff, including support assistants, have been successfully encouraged to develop their professional skills to a high standard. This has enabled them to work as a team to implement new ways of teaching in order to grasp the interest of pupils and help them make good progress in their learning.

Since the last inspection the school has implemented a new assessment and tracking system. This has successfully provided senior managers with a good overview of progress from year to year, especially in identifying pupils in Key Stage 2 who have not made the expected progress and who need additional support to be successful learners. However, the systems are not always used rigorously to identify younger pupils who need extra challenge to reach the higher levels, nor do they provide a clear enough overview of standards and progress in school to compare with the national trends and standards.

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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?	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

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?	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

9 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Gerard's Roman Catholic Primary School, Lostock Hall, Lancashire,
PR5 5TB

Thank you so much for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school a short while ago. We really enjoyed talking to you, especially the school council.

We were especially pleased to see how well behaved you are and how much you enjoy school and your learning.

Your school is making sure that you are all being well prepared to be responsible, caring, citizens. You are right to be proud of all the things you have done in helping to make the new part of your school so attractive. We did like the colour schemes in the toilets. The fact that they look so smart will help everyone take care of them so much better! You all know the importance of eating sensible food and taking lots of exercise. Do keep that up because it is so important to staying healthy and fit.

We could see by the work in your books and displays around the school that you are working hard in your lessons and reaching the standards expected of you in English maths and science. In order to help you improve even further the school is going to check that everyone is doing as well as possible and that you understand your targets and know how to improve your work. So listen carefully when your teachers talk to you or write comments in your books. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 who learn at a faster rate need some extra challenges so they can reach the higher levels.

You go to a good school where there are some interesting things happening and where your headteacher and teachers make lessons fun and help you learn such a lot. We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey

Lead inspector