

Our Lady and St Anselms Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitworth

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119697
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327113
Inspection date	10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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)	104
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	Mrs Nadine Carey-Whitehead
Headteacher	Mr John Cunningham
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	John Street Whitworth Rochdale Lancashire OL12 8DB
Telephone number	01706 853545

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	10 February 2009
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Fax number

01706 853545

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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:

- the current rate of pupils' progress across school
- whether teaching and learning are strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress through school and especially in Key Stage 1.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, members of staff and governors, observations of teaching and learning, views of parents, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation. 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 own self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small Catholic primary school situated in a village. Socio-economic circumstances locally are what are expected nationally although some pupils come from areas of significant disadvantage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is well below average. All pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well below average. More children leave or join the school during the school year than is usual. Children enter the Reception class in the autumn term. The school has the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, the Race Equality Mark and the Eco bronze 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 is a good school where pupils attain high standards and which offers outstanding care in accordance with its strong Catholic ethos. The headteacher has a very clear view of what needs to be done to make the school even better. New initiatives in the curriculum have enhanced pupils' enjoyment of their learning and helped to raise standards in writing. A strength of the school is the way pupils are encouraged to understand at what level they are working and know how to improve their work. As parents say, 'Children have a very good understanding of right and wrong and the importance of caring for all members of society. They are taught the importance of doing their best. I don't think children could possibly be happier, or more looked after at any other school'.

Children enter the Reception class with skills which are below what is typical for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage in most areas of learning and enter Key Stage 1 with skills which are average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average and reflect satisfactory progress. However, evidence seen during the inspection suggests that pupils now make good progress as a result of enthusiastic and exciting teaching. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils' achievement is good and they make good progress because of good teaching and learning. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress. Writing has been a weaker aspect of pupils' attainment but the strategies adopted by the school are beginning to impact on pupils' writing skills and on standards. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to write in subjects across the curriculum, for example, in history where report writing shows clear use of connectives and sentence structures.

Pupils' personal development is excellent. From an early age, pupils are very well aware of how to eat healthily and they speak enthusiastically about the many opportunities to take exercise. They also appreciate the opportunities to learn a musical instrument and take part in the many sporting and arts clubs available to them. Very positive relationships and good behaviour and attitudes contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their good progress in lessons. The staff are very successful in promoting the Christian purpose of the school by making excellent provision for prayer, reflection and meditation. Therefore, pupils' spiritual, moral and social awareness is exceptionally well developed. Pupils care for one another and feel extremely safe and secure in the school community. They are developing their knowledge of other faiths and cultures and of global issues, boosted for example by a link with a school in Uganda and a new connection with schools in Oman. This awareness and a very strong sense of the local community underpin the school's good contribution to community cohesion. The school's success in achieving the Race Equality Mark is indicative of its good work in this area. Very good self-evaluation processes mean that the school is aware of the need to develop pupils' understanding of the multi-ethnic nature of modern Britain further. Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy their learning and because families recognise the influential part the school plays in their children's lives.

Teaching and learning are good. Some teaching is outstanding. Lessons are well planned with a good range of stimulating activities and sufficient pace to allow pupils to understand clearly what they are learning. Good use is made of 'talk partners' and group work so that pupils can learn together and develop their speaking and listening skills which they use with great confidence. Lessons have clear learning objectives and teachers use questions well to check what pupils have learned. In less successful, though nonetheless satisfactory lessons, teachers

intervene too often and do not allow pupils time to develop their own ideas. Occasionally the pace of lessons drops and progress slows.

The curriculum is good. It is very strongly focused on individual need so that all groups of pupils have challenging work to do. The developing skill-based, thematic and creative curriculum allows pupils to see the links between subjects and has enhanced pupils' enjoyment and raised standards in all subjects. For example, in geography map-making skills are well developed. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education, including theme weeks which focus on enterprise skills, supports pupils' outstanding personal development. The very good development of skills in information and communication technology (ICT), together with pupils' excellent interpersonal skills, ensures they are exceptionally well placed to face life's future challenges.

The school works very closely with outside agencies to meet the diverse needs of pupils and all adults in school provide outstanding levels of care. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are quickly identified and appropriate strategies adopted to ensure that they thrive in school. Effective arrangements for health and safety and safeguarding children are in place and meet national guidelines. Teachers' marking helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work. Outstanding procedures for setting targets for pupils and tracking improvement in their work ensure that pupils make increasingly rapid progress.

Leadership and management are good. The strongly focused leadership of the experienced and respected headteacher ensures that the school continually strives to improve. There are very clear priorities to achieve this based on outstanding evaluation of the school. With very able support from the substantive and acting assistant headteachers, he has offered all teachers more responsibility and more accountability and they are relishing the challenge. An emphatic focus on pupils' learning, the setting of challenging targets and detailed analysis of what happens in classrooms are leading to a marked improvement in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and a consequent rise in the rate of pupils' progress. There is an impressive focus on equality of opportunity in this very inclusive school. Governors offer good levels of support and challenge to the school. Based on the improvements already made, the school has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of the provision in Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Learning and development in Reception is led and managed well by the class teacher, ably supported by the teaching assistants. As a result, children achieve well across all areas of learning. Children's personal development is excellent and arrangements for their welfare are strong. For example, the children quickly gain in confidence and develop positive attitudes towards learning due to the effective induction arrangements. Children's skills on entry vary considerably; however, they are generally below national expectations, especially in mathematics, reading and personal development. The teaching is adapted well to meet the needs of the children and as a result the majority reach the national average by the time they enter Year 1, especially in speaking and listening and personal development. Progress in reading and calculating is less secure. Well taught sessions on letters and sounds ensure phonic awareness is embedded; however, this is not always linked to the development of the children's reading skills. Where adult-led activities are planned well they are exciting, innovative and very enjoyable. For example, the children thoroughly enjoyed acting out the Rainbow Fish story in the snow. These activities stimulate

very good personal development and stretch children's imagination. Nevertheless, there is not always an appropriate balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Children's learning is assessed well and their progress is tracked in ways that make sure that their next steps are planned well. Highly effective partnerships exist with parents which engage them fully in their children's early development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage to provide a better balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities to improve standards in reading and calculation.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of modern Britain.

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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?	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	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	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?	1

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	1
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady and St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitworth, Lancashire,
OL12 8DB

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making us welcome when we inspected your school. Our Lady and St Anselm's Roman Catholic Primary School is a good school with outstanding features, one of which is you! The staff care for you exceptionally well. They help you to enjoy your learning because they want to make your lessons fun and arrange many exciting activities for you. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson and how to make your work better.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school on time and attend regularly. We think that your behaviour is good and you look after one another extremely well. We found that you are very polite and helpful, and we very much enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you enjoyed coming to school because you enjoyed your lessons and because you liked your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you, like the clubs and sporting activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way your teachers care for you, help you to enjoy your learning and help you to understand the difference between right and wrong.

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

- Give children in the Reception class more choice in their activities to help them improve their reading and calculation skills.
- Help you to know more about the different religious and cultural groups who live in modern Britain.

You can help by continuing to attend well and always doing your best. Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector