

The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119604
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339479
Inspection dates	6–7 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Gillian Salter-Smith

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	411
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Spencer
Headteacher	Mrs J Butterworth
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Nineteen lessons were observed, 13 teachers were seen and two teaching assistants were observed teaching small groups of pupils. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and the School Improvement Partner. An inspector talked to parents and carers as they arrived at the school with their children. Inspectors observed the school's work, and documents scrutinised included the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the school's analysis of data that tracks pupils' progress, and documents and policies relating to safeguarding children. Questionnaires were received and analysed from 115 parents and carers. Questionnaires received from pupils and staff were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of teaching and assessment in sustaining recent improvements in attainment and progress
- the effectiveness of action taken to improve standards in writing, particularly for the more able pupils
- behaviour, especially at playtimes
- improvements in attendance, with particular reference to persistent absences
- the capacity of leaders and managers in sustaining recent improvement.

Information about the school

The school has a well above average number of pupils on roll for a school of its type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to most schools. Of these pupils a small number are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. A higher proportion of pupils than the national average joins or leaves the school at times other than the usual starts in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Strong and effective leadership at all levels, including the governing body, has ensured rapid improvement in all areas of the school since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and enjoy learning because they are well taught by teachers and support staff who work effectively together. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet pupils' different needs and, increasingly, provides activities that pupils find exciting and enjoyable. Good care and support, based on positive relationships with adults and secure safeguarding arrangements, help pupils to feel safe and secure in school. Pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are helped to overcome barriers that may prevent them from learning through well tailored support from within the school and through effective partnerships with external agencies. As a result of this good provision, pupils' achievement has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. Pupils' attainment is average overall but is stronger in mathematics and reading than in writing.

Strong Christian values underpin the work of the school, encouraging respect for each other and clear values. Positive relationships are forged with parents and carers, who are regularly consulted for their views. Pupils thrive in this supportive atmosphere. They behave well and enjoy learning. Most pupils take up the many opportunities the school provides for extra activity in sport, drama and music. They enjoy well-structured active play at lunchtimes and they know how to eat healthily. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and the school council is highly effective in achieving its objective, 'To make school a better place to be.'

Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on rigorous monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision. The need to improve writing is already a priority for the school and action taken to improve the literacy skills of younger pupils and of older pupils who had fallen behind has been successful in accelerating progress. The significant improvement evident in pupils' achievement and the quality of provision since the previous inspection demonstrates the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment overall especially in writing by:
 - making more precise use of assessment information to plan learning in lessons so that all pupils are consistently challenged or suitably supported
 - making better use of individual pupils' targets in writing to help them to focus

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on the next steps in learning whenever they are writing

- ensuring that all marking of work helps pupils to understand how well they are doing and what they must do to improve
- sharing the best practice in teaching and learning between staff more frequently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy lessons, concentrate well and are well motivated to learn. They are used to talking to each other in a well-structured way about their learning. They enjoy role play and drama that helps them to write more imaginatively and intensely. Following the use of drama to explore ideas, Years 5 and 6 pupils produced high quality writing that showed depth of thought and well reasoned analysis of Macbeth's character and motivation. Pupils respond well to praise from staff and gain confidence through being successful in meeting the clear success criteria identified in lessons.

Most pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is on a clear, rising trend and is average overall. Attainment is weaker in writing because pupils start school with weaker skills in literacy and there are occasional inconsistencies in progress between classes. The school has recognised this and has introduced robust schemes that are successfully accelerating progress in literacy, especially for younger pupils and older pupils who have fallen behind. More excitement in the curriculum is promoting better writing. Girls and boys and pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress, although there are differences in their attainment from year-to-year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the staff identify their needs quickly and provide a good variety of support that meets their needs.

Attendance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is broadly average. Pupils are developing good social awareness and skills. They enjoy raising funds for various charities. They care for the environment and take part in a good range of enterprise activities. They work well in pairs and groups and most care for and respect one another. They have a well developed sense of what is right and wrong. They take part in prayer and reflection with reverence and sincerity. Pupils are developing an understanding of people different to themselves in their own community.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage pupils' learning and behaviour well so that lessons proceed smoothly. Pupils enjoy a good variety of activities that encourages independence in learning and ensures that they are all involved in thinking and working things out. Teachers' secure subject knowledge enables them to ask probing questions and encourage pupils to explore their reasoning. Lessons are well planned and clear learning intentions and success criteria are shared with pupils so they know exactly what they should do to succeed in each lesson. Staff frequently refer to success criteria, helping pupils to remain focused and purposeful. Pupils benefit from assessing their own and each other's success. Pupils have targets to guide their learning, but they are not always encouraged to think about them when they do their work, and so they miss opportunities to improve their punctuation, spelling and vocabulary in their writing. Assessment information is used very well to identify and tackle underachievement and to ensure pupils are taught in groups of similar ability. In a few lessons this information is not used precisely enough to ensure that learning tasks provide the right level of challenge. Much of the marking of pupils' work is helpful and encouraging to pupils but this quality is not yet consistent across the school. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and progress, working effectively with small groups and individuals to put teachers' careful planning into good effect.

The curriculum meets pupils' differing needs well. Pupils are taught in groups of similar ability for literacy and numeracy, ensuring that work is mostly pitched at the right level. As the creative curriculum is further developed, exciting events and themes increasingly engross the pupils and sometimes result in imaginative, high quality writing, for

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example, Year 6 work on the Second World War.

Pastoral support for pupils is good. Designated workers provide very good support for pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable such that these pupils are able to take a full part in school life. Systems to manage pupils' behaviour are used well and pupils respond positively to praise and rewards. Systems to improve attendance have been effective in reducing persistent absence and improving the overall rate of attendance. Pupils joining the school at times other than the usual start in Early Years Foundation Stage are well supported and settle into school life quickly.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by senior and middle leaders, sets high expectations for herself, staff and pupils, and there is a relentless and well considered drive for improvement. There is a common focus among staff on providing a safe and happy environment in which pupils enjoy learning, achieve well and develop into responsible young people. Middle leaders contribute to school self-evaluation and school improvement planning that identifies the right priorities. For example, the school is well focused on raising attainment in writing and is already working on increasing the frequency of monitoring of pupils' progress in order to identify inconsistencies in progress more quickly. Well focused professional development and in-service training have helped to improve the effectiveness of teaching, assessment and the curriculum. However, the good practice that exists in the school is not yet shared widely enough across the school to eradicate inconsistencies in some areas, for example, marking of pupils' work.

The governing body is knowledgeable and experienced. It is ambitious for the school and sets challenging targets for pupils' achievement. Members of the governing body know the school well and hold leaders closely to account, in particular for the impact of the provision on pupils' progress. They ensure that statutory requirements are met and are rigorous in ensuring the safeguarding of pupils. Arrangements for vetting staff meet requirements. Procedures for child protection are meticulous. Thorough assessment of risks protects pupils and staff.

The school tracks the progress of individuals and different groups of pupils closely, helping to identify where action needs to be taken to ensure no group is disadvantaged. As a result gaps between the progress of different groups of pupils, such as girls and

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boys, are diminishing and the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is increasing. In this way, equal opportunities are promoted well.

The school has carried out a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and has a carefully considered policy and plan for community cohesion. Pupils have many opportunities to meet with a wide range of people from their own locality. The school makes the most of opportunities for pupils from different religious and cultural backgrounds to share their traditions and festivals. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and the school is a harmonious community. Links have yet to be established with schools in the global community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are happy in school and enjoy learning. They behave well and relationships with adults are good so that children feel confident and able to contribute their ideas. Welfare and safety requirements are met and children are safe and secure. A good balance between activities led by adults and those initiated by the children is achieved both indoors and outdoors. The outdoor areas are used well to develop learning in all areas of the curriculum, although in Nursery the lack of clothing to protect children in wet weather poses a restriction on the continual use of the outdoor area. Children happily play and choose activities independently in well organised classrooms that are generally bright and welcoming, although parts of the Nursery area lack stimulation and are in need of refurbishment. Leaders and managers keep good records of children's progress and use this information to ensure activities meet children's needs and to identify priorities for improvement. Recent work on improving children's language skills

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is proving effective. Many children arrive with levels of development well below those expected for their age, and are often weak in communication, language and literacy skills, and personal and social development. Children make good progress and achieve well and by the time they leave Reception most are much closer to national expectations, though still below, especially in literacy development.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are highly supportive of the school, recognising and appreciating the significant improvements that have been made. The vast majority of comments were positive and praised the positive impact of the headteacher, the quality of the teaching and learning, the communication with parents, and the effectiveness of the care and support provided. Inspectors' findings support these views.

A very small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about bullying that was not dealt with effectively and the lack of homework. During the inspection inspectors talked to many pupils who were happy that the very rare instances of bullying were sorted out quickly. Systems to encourage good behaviour and encourage positive relationships between pupils were found to be effective. Homework is given on a regular basis and information and communication technology is used effectively by pupils and staff for this purpose.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 115 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 411 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	63	40	35	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	86	75	28	24	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	66	57	43	37	6	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	59	42	37	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	67	36	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	56	47	41	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	57	48	42	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	68	59	41	36	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	66	57	45	39	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	54	46	40	6	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	43	60	52	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	71	62	43	37	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	65	40	35	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



8 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Blessed Sacrament Catholic Primary School, Preston, PR2 6LX

Many thanks to all of you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with so many of you. You are right to be proud of your school. It is a good school that takes good care of you and helps you to achieve well. It was pleasing to hear that most of you feel safe in school and are confident that the staff will give you help you when you need it. Many of you talked about how lessons are fun and interesting and it was good to see how well you worked in your lessons, concentrating hard and enjoying activities such as drama and role play. We were very interested to hear some of you talk about how much the school has improved recently. It is clear that the leaders and managers, together with the governing body and all staff, have worked hard to make the school a better place for you to be and learn. As a result of the improvements your attainment is steadily improving, more so in mathematics and reading than in writing. In order to help you to attain even better standards, especially in your writing, we have asked the school to improve in a few areas. We have asked that:

- teachers make sure that learning in lessons challenges you all at the right level
- whenever you are writing you are reminded to think about your own target of what to do to improve your writing
- when your work is marked it is always clear how well you have done and what you should do to improve
- staff spend more time sharing between them the very best ways of teaching and supporting you.

You can help by continuing to enjoy school and all that it offers to you.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Gillian Salter-Smith

Lead inspector

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