

St Oswald's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119657
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339494
Inspection dates	24–25 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Dower

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	160
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Jordon
Headteacher	Mr J Brown
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited five lessons and observed five teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and three governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' books and files, monitoring and assessment records, minutes of governing body meetings, school improvement, curriculum and lesson plans. Thirty four completed questionnaire returns from parents and carers were analysed, together with 59 from pupils and four from staff.

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

- pupils' current progress and the level of their basic skills
- the use of structured learning activities in lessons to challenge all groups
- the use of assessments and improvement targets to support pupils in their learning
- safeguarding arrangements to ensure pupils' well-being and the quality of the care, guidance and support they receive
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels to bring about improvements in pupils' personal and academic development.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above average and that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The majority of pupils are White British, with a minority, about 30%, of Pakistani heritage. These pupils speak English as an additional language and just over half are at an early stage of learning the language. The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy Schools award. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

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. Pupils' overall attainment is broadly average. This represents good learning and progress in relation to their starting points in the Nursery that are well below that typically expected. All groups of pupils across the school mostly achieve well, including those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those of Pakistani heritage. Those ethnic minority pupils who are at an early stage of learning English also make good progress and achieve well because of the timely and effective support they receive. A very small minority of the most-able pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress because at times their individual targets are insufficiently challenging. In the Nursery and Reception classes, children make good progress and achieve well because of very effective leadership.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. The older pupils take on responsibilities, for example, helping the younger ones with reading. The school council is active in raising money for charity and ensuring extra playground equipment to promote exercise and enjoyment. Pupils' good behaviour, punctuality and basic skills mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education.

Christian values underpin the pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and are also evident in the good care and support they receive. Structured learning activities are used well to meet the needs of all pupils, yet there are inconsistencies in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching aid, particularly to engage pupils actively in their learning. Good use of assessment usually enables teaching to match work to pupils' needs although the use of target setting is insufficiently challenging for a few of the more-able pupils. The curriculum is structured well to meet the needs of all groups. Cross-curricular and creative links enhance pupils' enjoyment, give coherence to their learning and extend opportunities for them to develop basic skills.

The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs doing to raise the bar. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to the setting of appropriate priorities to enhance pupils' personal and academic development. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. There are extensive and effective links with outside agencies and partner institutions to promote pupils' learning and well-being. The school is a harmonious and calm place to work in and makes a good contribution to the cohesion of the wider community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and increase the rate of learning by 2011, by

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- ensuring that individual targets are sufficiently challenging, in particular for the most-able boys and girls
- exploiting information and communication technology as a teaching aid.¿

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their work. They are confident, self-reliant and can find out things for themselves. They know right from wrong and are aware of the consequences of their actions. Their appreciation of society's cultural and religious diversity is good for their age. This, together with links with the church, regular worship and the impact of their creative work, promotes pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have good social, speaking and listening skills and a natural courtesy and openness. They make friends easily and work and play well together. They are actively involved in local community activities through their music and sport. Their good behaviour is often commented upon by members of the public. Good punctuality both to school and to lessons means that no time is lost in learning.

The school's assessment information and inspection evidence from lesson observations and analysis of pupils' books show that pupils' current progress is good across the key stages. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are well placed to match the standards attained in 2009 when attainment was average and performance targets were met. The progress of a very small minority of the most-able pupils is slower because their individual targets lack challenge. The school is beginning to tackle this to ensure that they always make enough progress, thus demonstrating its commitment to equality of opportunity for every boy and girl. However, it is too early to see the outcomes in terms of raised standards. Pupils have satisfactory skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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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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 Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of the teaching observed ranged from good to outstanding and this matches the school's evaluation. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lesson planning mostly provides well for the different age and ability groupings in each class. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at monitoring progress in lessons and intervening at an early stage should any problems arise. Good use is made of assessments to show pupils how well they are doing and what they have to do to improve. Much of the marking seen in pupils' books is outstanding in its detail and its blend of encouraging comments with pointers for improvement. Usually, teachers use challenging targets to get the best from pupils, but for a few of the most-able pupils these are insufficiently demanding. Although some good practice was seen in the use of ICT, it is not in use fully as a teaching aid to excite and engage pupils.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Enrichment activities are extensive and the take up is high for the wide and interesting range of extra-curricular provision. The quality of pupils' care, guidance and support contributes significantly to their good personal and academic development. Timely and appropriate guidance aids transition between key stages and satisfactorily prepares pupils for the move to secondary school. Pupils say, and the school's records show, that bullying is rare. When it does occur, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	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?

Leaders, managers, governors and all who work in the school are ambitious for its success. They ensure that there is an equal opportunity for each child. Barriers to learning are dismantled. There is no discrimination and no harassment in pupils' relationships with each other. As a consequence, morale is high and there is a sense of

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common purpose and shared endeavour. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and the progress and well-being of pupils is good. The school is in the process of improving its tracking system to inform the target setting process more effectively. Governors have good formal and frequently used informal methods for monitoring the school's performance. Governors and staff have a good understanding of religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the community they serve. They have created a happy school where staff and pupils work well together and where its influence is felt in the wider community. There are good links with parents and carers to support their children's learning and development and with outside agencies to support specific groups and individuals. Safeguarding procedures are effective and meet requirements. Safe working is evident in daily routines. Health and safety audits are undertaken regularly. The school gives good value for money.

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 get off to a good start in the Nursery. Imaginative activities and a safe and secure environment ensure that they settle happily into school. From starting points well below expected levels, especially in language and social skills, children make good progress and achieve well. This includes children from minority ethnic backgrounds. By the end of the Reception Year pupils' attainment is below that typically expected in communication and social skills and close to average in some other areas of learning. Reception and Nursery staff work well together and provide a rich and stimulating learning environment. They have a good understanding of the learning and personal

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needs of this age range. They know when to provide timely and appropriate support and when to allow children to work independently and learn for themselves. The outdoor provision is used imaginatively to allow children to explore and be creative. Assessment is good. Every child has an individual file showing their progress. This includes photographs of the progress they are making. The school shares this with parents and carers to enable them to support their children's learning more effectively. Leaders have created a common sense of purpose between adults who work well together to ensure that every child has the best possible start.

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

A small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. They support the school and recognise the progress their children make both academically and in their personal development. The inspectors found that their views are well-founded. The few concerns raised related to individual problems and did not reveal any pattern of dissatisfaction.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Oswald's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 160 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	55	17	45	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	63	14	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	17	45	21	55	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	42	22	58	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	20	53	18	47	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	39	21	55	1	3	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	39	22	58	0	0	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)	11	29	20	53	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	39	23	61	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	34	24	63	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	29	26	68	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	17	45	21	55	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	45	20	53	0	0	1	3

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



26 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's Roman Catholic Primary School, Accrington, Accrington, BB5 0NN

Thank you for the warm welcome we received during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed seeing all the interesting things you are doing and talking to you about your work. You made a valuable contribution to the inspection.

We judge that yours is a good school. You make good progress in your work and you have the personal qualities to be successful at school and in later life. For example, you can work independently and find things out for yourself and you talk confidently about your work to the whole class and to visitors.

Your behaviour is good and you all get on well together. You told us how much you like your teachers and the teaching assistants and that they are always there to give you the help and support you need. We saw this in their careful marking of your work. Many of you said that such comments help you to improve. Please continue to read and think about what your teachers write because their advice and guidance in your books are excellent.

There are always things to do to make your school better. We have asked that the targets you are set in your work help you do the best you possibly can and also that ICT is used more by teachers to make lessons as interesting and challenging as possible.

You can help by continuing to work hard and support each other.

Thank you again for the help you gave us. Our best wishes to you for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Dower

Lead inspector

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