

Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119596
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	358588
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Eileen Guerin
Headteacher	Miss Melanie Haggerty
Date of previous school inspection	4 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Ten lessons were observed; seven different teachers were seen, and meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body's meetings, the tracking of pupils' achievements and a range of school policies, such as those relating to safeguarding. A total of 96 questionnaires were returned by parents and carers and analysed.

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

- It looked at the progress made by pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- It looked at the progress made by the various small groups in the school.
- It considered the extent to which pupils use their basic literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- It judged the quality of the school's improvement planning.
- It judged the quality of pupils' knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity.

Information about the school

This below average-sized primary school serves mainly White British pupils and a few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. A few pupils are from the Traveller community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils are looked after children. The school has achieved Healthy Schools status.

Extended services include breakfast and after-school clubs run by a management committee. They did not form part of the inspection process.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It provides sound value for money. It is much appreciated by the pupils and by most parents and carers. Typical of parents' and carers' positive views is: 'My child gets up every day, happy to go to school. She is challenged and supported academically, spiritually and morally.' The school has a number of strengths including the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; excellent teaching and learning in music; effective care, guidance and support; a good Reception class; the strong curriculum; and the successful promotion of equal opportunities and community cohesion.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are invariably keen and enthusiastic in lessons and well behaved in and around the school. They are fully aware that they should make a contribution to school and community and do so with good grace, whether doing tasks in the school or making donations to charity. Some good enterprise experience came from the making of 'smoothies' to raise funds. Pupils are well aware of the benefits of leading healthy and safe lifestyles.

Attainment is average by the end of Key Stage 2. There has been some variability in recent years, but the outcomes in the 2010 national tests showed a big improvement on the previous year, particularly for the more able pupils. Nevertheless, evidence from the inspection confirms that while progress in writing and mathematics is satisfactory, there are inconsistencies, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils could make more progress in these subjects. Teaching is satisfactory. There are some good lessons, but not enough to ensure that pupils are making consistently good progress. The school recognises that there is some variability in the way that pupils' work is marked and this means that some pupils are not as clear as they could be about their achievements and what they need to do to improve further.

Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and there is a sound base of evidence. There is good evidence of improvement and greater rigour in the way that pupils' achievements are tracked. Opportunities for monitoring activities by governors and subject leaders, such as teaching and learning, are not sufficiently regular or rigorous enough for a full and informative view to be formed about the impact of their actions on pupils' achievements. Consequently, the capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teaching is improved

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- ensuring that assessment and marking are consistently used to introduce more challenge and support in pupils' learning
- continuing to increase the promotion of basic writing and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - increasing the rigour of subject leaders' monitoring of provision and outcomes
 - encouraging the governing body to become more independent and rigorous in its monitoring and evaluation.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons pupils usually make satisfactory progress and make expected gains in skills, knowledge and understanding. They are keen and enthusiastic learners. Nevertheless, there are inconsistencies in the rate of progress because the level of challenge is not always closely matched to the needs of pupils.

Achievement is satisfactory. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 2. The school is focusing hard on improving English standards and improvement can be seen as a result. During Years 3 to 6 progress is uneven. Pupils make the greatest gains in Year 6. In recent years, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated between above average and below average. The evidence of inspection suggests that they are currently average with the more able pupils doing particularly well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and other small groups are making good progress because they receive strong support within the school and from partners. This takes the form of booster groups, one-to-one tuition and individual support.

Pupils' moral and social development is particularly strong. This leads to pupils who are responsible, considerate, polite and well behaved. They enjoy school and this pleases their parents and carers. Attitudes to school, work and each other are overwhelmingly positive. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and work and play safely. Attendance is broadly average. Through the school council, pupils have an active voice in developments in the school. They know and understand that a healthy lifestyle is important, including regular exercise and a good, balanced diet. They develop satisfactory skills which contribute to social and economic well-being. Pupils know that they belong to a diverse community through work in subjects such as religious education and geography.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. Across all classes the common strengths include good relationships that encourage confidence, the promotion of enquiry and shared opinions, the valuing of pupils' views, the creation of a positive atmosphere for learning and excellent teaching in music. In Years 1 and 2 teaching and learning are satisfactory and most pupils make adequate progress. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is more erratic because teachers' knowledge and understanding of the promotion of writing and mathematics is variable. Target setting for individual pupils and marking and the use of assessment information are at an early stage of development but sound overall. There is strong support for pupils with extra learning needs.

The good curriculum is well matched to local needs and traditions. Outstanding provision for music includes very strong input from the local authority, an extra-curricular wind band and collaboration with the local secondary school. Health and safety initiatives are promoted well and have attracted awards. A good range of enrichment activities include a very wide range of after-school clubs. In addition, there is an extensive range of visits and visitors. Good use is made of ICT to enrich many areas of the curriculum. The school is well aware that the use of literacy, numeracy and ICT across the whole curriculum requires further improvement. Where necessary, the curriculum is adapted and modified well to meet the needs of individuals.

Pupils say they feel secure, happy and safe and most parents and carers are satisfied that they are well looked after. The learning mentor plays a significant and effective part in all of this work, including implementing the strong systems to monitor attendance, behaviour and safety. Any pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are

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identified early and good strategies are speedily put in place, including early contact with appropriate outside agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 provides a strong vision for the school. Under her leadership, the school sets ambitious academic targets that are increasingly met. There have been satisfactory gains since the last inspection, for instance the introduction of better academic tracking procedures that give a clearer picture of pupils' achievements to inform improvement planning and performance management. The headteacher is supported adequately by the satisfactory governing body. Committees do much of the detailed work and communication with the full governing body is effective. The governing body remains over-reliant on managers for information about the school. The school's improvement planning identifies an accurate range of improvements that are needed but does not link these sufficiently to measurable outcomes; however, leaders and managers have a good understanding of the local context. Subjects such as religious education and geography promote community cohesion through the impetus they provide for learning about diversity at a school, local and global scale. The headteacher and senior managers ensure that pupils benefit equally from all the school offers and they tackle discrimination in a positive and firm manner. Arrangements for safeguarding are well established and staff are trained to meet the needs of pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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

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	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in Reception. Children's skills and abilities when they enter Reception are very variable year- on -year. Sometimes they enter with skills, knowledge and understanding at levels that are low, particularly communication skills, and with poor social and emotional development. In other years these are at a level that is expected for their age. Good provision in Reception leads to children making good progress. As a result, by the end of Reception children have made up much ground in their learning and usually reach, at least, the level expected for children moving into Year 1. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities and this leads to children developing their independence and learning skills through play and exploration. In this, the outside area is used as effectively as the indoor provision. Good care and support for children and the development of strong relationships with parents and carers ensure that children settle well, are happy and clearly grow in confidence and self-esteem. Children's individual developmental and learning needs are carefully assessed and their progress records are good. Children with additional learning and developmental needs are identified quickly and catered for well. Children make a good start to early reading and writing. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and foster the motivation, enjoyment and interest shown by children as they move into Key Stage 1.

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

The respondents to the questionnaire are highly supportive of the work of the school. Most say that they are happy with their children's experience at the school; their children enjoy school, make enough progress and are well prepared for the future; teaching is good; the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour; and the school helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle. Written comments mainly praise

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the work of the school and the way that it supports parents and carers. Isolated instances of bullying and lack of information about their children's progress were raised as concerns on a few questionnaires. Inspectors checked the bullying issue with groups of pupils and there was no evidence to suggest that it is a problem in the school. Information for parents and carers about their children's progress is satisfactory, but the school accepts that a consultation meeting in the near future would be useful.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady of the Assumption 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 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	67	28	29	2	2	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	65	68	28	29	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	40	44	46	9	9	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	47	37	39	5	5	4	4
The teaching is good at this school	56	58	30	31	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	50	38	40	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	52	54	40	42	1	1	1	1
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)	44	46	39	41	5	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	50	34	35	6	6	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	33	34	39	41	5	5	13	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	35	48	50	7	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	50	52	37	39	4	4	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	68	24	25	2	2	5	5

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of the Assumption Catholic Primary School, Blackpool, FY4 5DF

On behalf of the inspection team, may I tell you how much we enjoyed being in your school recently. It was a great pleasure and privilege to work with you and the staff of the school. We were delighted when many of you talked freely with us and we were impressed by your courtesy and the help you provided. We have judged your school to be satisfactory, but we also recognise its strengths.

What we particularly liked about your school was:

- the good progress made by children in Reception
- the improved results in the 2010 tests
- your good knowledge and understanding of the need to lead healthy and safe lives
- your good attitudes to work and school
- the important role the school council plays in the school on your behalf
- the contribution made by groups, such as peer mentors, as you seek to help and support each other
- the good progress made by pupils who have extra learning needs
- the good curriculum
- how well all the staff care for you and make sure that you feel safe and secure
- the hard and good work that the headteacher and staff are doing to ensure that you are treated equally and fairly, benefit from partnerships and that your parents and carers are supported.

In order to improve your school further we have asked your teachers to speed up your progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. They are also going to improve the consistency of the way they set targets for you and mark your work. You can be a great help in this by continuing always to do your best work and by following closely the guidance of your teachers. We also want the governing body to do a lot more work on checking the work of staff.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Heap

Lead Inspector

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