

St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119514
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	358571
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Gethin HMI

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	431
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Frances Walsh
Headteacher	Mr Michael Duxbury
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. They observed 18 lessons taught by 17 staff. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors, staff and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including: safeguarding procedures, self-evaluation reports, the tracking of pupils' progress, the work pupils were doing in their books and the questionnaires completed by 241 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels and their capacity to sustain improvement.
- The rate of progress of different groups and whether their needs are adequately met.
- How well the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of children and whether this is leading to improving outcomes

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Ninety four per cent of pupils are of White British Heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with statements is above average. The school provides a breakfast club for pupils. The school was formed following an amalgamation of an infant and junior school in September 2002. In September 2008, the school moved into a new building. Since the last inspection a new model of senior management has been introduced due to a prolonged vacancy period for a deputy headteacher. In September 2010 a new deputy headteacher was appointed. The school has gained the Healthy School status and Activemark 2008.

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

3

Main findings

The school provides a good quality of education in a safe, welcoming and caring environment. One parent's comment that the school is 'a fantastic place' and that they are 'very happy with the education and care' was typical of the views expressed. At the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement is good. For the last three years the schools results in the national tests in mathematics have continued to improve and overall attainment is above average. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as that of their classmates. Pupils say they feel safe and as one pupil said 'all adults are supportive and comforting'. Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils welcome visitors warmly and with respect. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to their positive attitude to learning.

Pupils' successful learning in lessons is attributable to good teaching based on an effective curriculum. Progress is good overall but is variable throughout the school. This is because assessment is not always used successfully to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils. As pupils move up through the school the level of progress increases and rapidly accelerates in Years 5 and 6. Where teaching is strongest, the planned activities are adjusted well to suit individual needs, the lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils flourish as they direct their own activities. Where teaching is less effective activities are over- directed leaving little time for pupils to work independently and explore ideas for themselves.

Teachers and teaching assistants know children well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children engage well in some activities and confidently use computers. However, some activities lack pace and the more-able children miss opportunities to extend their learning. Learning is mainly confined to the classroom with little use made of the outdoor area to enable children to explore the environment fully.

Fundamental changes in the last few years including the amalgamation of the infant and junior school, moving to a new building and the long-term vacancy for a deputy headteacher have had a direct impact on the leadership and management of the school. The headteacher, supported by a close-knit staff team has led the school single-mindedly during this period of significant change. As staffing has become more stable, there has been a need to refocus priorities leading to a re-structure of the senior management team. Changes are emerging but as yet the monitoring of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently rigorous to ensure consistency in the quality of teaching especially in checking that teachers' everyday practice leads to the best outcomes for children. The recent appointment of the deputy headteacher along with the developing role of senior leaders in promoting and spreading best practice provides a clear indication of the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve consistency in the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning is rigorous and has an impact on improving learning outcomes for pupils
 - ensuring teachers always use assessment effectively.
- Improve the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring consistently good teaching and learning across the Nursery and Reception classes
 - promoting continuous provision across all areas of learning in the outdoor area.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have positive attitudes and apply themselves well in class. They are keen to learn and are well-behaved. There are good examples of groups working well together. For example, Year 4 made good use of a carousel of activities in a science lesson with each group moving to a different challenge in turn and letting out 'whoops' of excitement when challenges were completed. In a Year 6 English lesson pupils responded with enthusiasm to the 'mission' set by the teacher to write an effective opening for a spy thriller story.

Pupils' current work, as well as the current results for 2010, show that both attainment and progress are good. Pupils enter school with attainment that varies but many have below-average communication skills. They enter Year 1 broadly in line with the level expected. Work in pupils' books and in lessons suggest that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Progress accelerates as pupils move through the school and they leave Year 6 having made good progress with mathematics being above average.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good knowledge with regard to keeping themselves safe when using the Internet and good use is made of Circle Time sessions which allow pupils to discuss personal, social and health issues. The Pyramid club is effective in developing social skills for targeted pupils. Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils say there is no bullying and if there was they are confident staff would deal with it. They are happy with the school reward system where a raffle ticket can lead to a prize. Attendance is above average and pursued when necessary in liaison with the local authority.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and enjoy healthy snacks at playtime. The importance of exercise is recognised through a wide range of physical activities including swimming, rugby, cross country and netball. Parents and carers are encouraged to walk to school with their children and the new cycle shelter will provide encouragement for pupils to cycle to school. Pupils are equally aware of the dangers associated with smoking and drugs.

Pupils have many opportunities to take responsibilities such as monitors and reading champions. The school's strong caring ethos encourages pupils to be tolerant and value other cultures. Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through the inter-faith day and visitors from a wide range of cultures are welcomed into the school to work with

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the pupils. To their credit the school council have been successful in raising money each month to support a school in Sierra Leone.

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	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is mainly good with some that is satisfactory. In the better lessons the teachers have good subject knowledge and work at a brisk pace. Differentiation is used effectively and pupils apply themselves diligently in interesting and engaging tasks. Assessment is used well throughout the lesson and again in the plenary. Teachers have high expectations and give good advice on the next steps. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively, for instance, Year 4 pupils enjoyed building circuits on a website accessed via their laptops. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively throughout the school and provide an additional layer of expertise as they use their skills to support individuals and small groups both within and outside the class. When teaching is less strong assessment is much weaker and best use is not made of resources to help pupils' progress. Lesson assessment information is not always used well to meet the varying needs of pupils. Pupils have limited knowledge of their personal targets and the use of them to secure improvement is variable. Occasionally, too much time is spent on teacher-input leaving less time for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations.

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The curriculum meets the needs of learners well. A reading project for boys and the mathematics programme in Year 2 have enabled pupils to improve their key skills. The curriculum is enhanced by trips and visitors and day-to-day use of ICT. Pupils also benefit from opportunities to learn French and music.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well supported by all staff. The majority of pupils feel that adults within school care for them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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 has shown great determination in leading the school through a significant period of change over the last few years. Bringing two separate schools together to have a shared vision requires commitment and dedication. The vacant deputy headteacher post led to a much-needed re-structure of the senior management team. The success of this is demonstrated by the highly-cohesive staff team who work as one, providing invaluable support. The legacy of managing through this period has been that the monitoring of teaching has not been done with the expected frequency and rigour. As a result, teachers are not fully challenged and this impedes their own personal development. Assessment is not always used effectively; this along with the pupils' progress meeting only being held at the end of the year has resulted in progress not being consistent throughout the school. Nevertheless, together, with the support of staff and governors and the welcome appointment of a deputy headteacher the school is moving in the right direction to improve further. Success can be seen in the effective action to raise attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Concerted effort is now being focused on raising attainment across Key Stage 1.

The school is a harmonious community within which all groups are treated equally and the school is effective in improving pupils' well-being and tackling discrimination. The effectiveness of safeguarding is satisfactory. All procedures are in place and meet requirements. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and provides satisfactory management. Governors are well-informed. However, the opportunities to become more effective through direct involvement in the school's self-evaluation are not yet fully embedded. Staff are keen and enthusiastic to promote community cohesion throughout the school. As yet the school does not have a clearly-agreed set of actions to promote its work with pupils on a local, national and global context in order to be fully effective.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills on entry to the Nursery vary but are frequently below those typical for their age in language and communication. Leadership is satisfactory and relationships between adults and children are strong. As a result, children feel confident and secure. They know how to keep themselves safe by letting an adult know when they move indoors from outdoor play. They have a basic understanding of health as they have great fun washing vegetables and say it is necessary because they need to 'get the dirt off'. They enjoy bananas and milk at snack time and say that chocolate is not allowed as 'it makes you fat'.

When the activities are fun and move at a pace children are interested, behave well and make good progress. At other times particularly in some child-initiated activities children lack focus and overall progress is satisfactory. In some adult-initiated activities the large group size prevents good progress as the more-able children complete their work at a good pace but then have to wait for the rest of the group to finish. Children are competent in using the mouse and computer in number games and work well together to find the correct answer. Observation and assessment is carried out but not linked to planning for all children. Therefore, staff cannot be sure that provision supports individual learning and development. Planning across all six areas of learning is focused on classroom activities and opportunities are missed to use the outdoor area as part of 'continuous provision' to extend children's development.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

In terms of the number of questionnaires returned, the response was fairly typical of most inspections of primary schools. Almost all the parents and carers who responded expressed positive views of the school. Parents and carers value highly the work of the school in helping their children to be happy. On the whole parents' and carers' views matched those of the inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn 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 241 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 431 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	160	66	77	32	0	0	3	1
The school keeps my child safe	177	73	62	26	0	0	2	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	129	54	99	41	11	5	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	141	59	91	38	6	2	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	159	66	77	32	0	0	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	150	62	82	34	6	2	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	136	56	101	42	3	1	1	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)	129	54	94	39	3	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	144	60	93	39	1	0	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	132	55	94	39	10	4	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	111	46	117	49	5	2	3	1
The school is led and managed effectively	170	71	69	29	1	0	1	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	173	72	66	27	0	0	2	1

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn, Blackburn, BB2 2RY.

You may remember that I visited your school recently with two other inspectors to carry out an inspection. Thank you for making us so welcome. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing what you had to say. This letter is to explain what we found.

You clearly enjoy coming to school and make the most of it. Your behaviour is good and you look after and help each other. You are taught well, make good progress in your work and the school takes care of you. We were pleased to hear how much you know about keeping fit and staying healthy. You make good progress particularly in mathematics and some of you are making better progress in your reading and writing. We could see how you found some lessons interesting and exciting, for example, when you were completing circuits to light a bulb and make a doorbell ring.

Your teachers work hard to make sure you go to a good school. To help them make the school even better we have asked that they always make sure the work is challenging enough for you and that your lessons are all exciting. We have also asked the school to make more use of the outdoor play area throughout the day for the younger children.

You can all help by telling your teachers if the work is too hard or too easy and trying hard in lessons. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Gethin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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