



St Paul's Roman Catholic Primary School, Feniscowles, Blackburn

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119649
LEA Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 280624
Inspection dates 5 October 2005 to 6 October 2005
Reporting inspector John Coleman

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Preston Old Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Feniscowles
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Blackburn, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 201495
Number on roll	196	Fax number	
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Joe Slater
Date of previous inspection	1 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Rosemary Morris

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 5 October 2005 - 6 October 2005	Inspection number 280624
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Paul's is a Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School on the western edge of Blackburn. It is a one-form entry school and currently has 196 pupils on roll aged from four to eleven years. It is the Roman Catholic Parish school of Pleasington Priory and St Paul's Feniscowles. The number of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. All pupils have English as their first language. Eleven percent of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities of whom approximately three percent have a statement of SEN. The mobility of pupils into and out of the school is low. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is wide ranging, but is at least average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school's self-evaluation, confirmed by the inspection judgements, is that this is a good school with some outstanding features.

Overall, the good leadership and management and the drive of the headteacher are achieving sustained improvement in the standards of education. As a result standards are high and pupils make good progress. Very effective teaching which is creative and challenging means that pupils are happy coming to school and enjoy their lessons. Subject leaders have a good understanding of standards, but are not as well informed on the quality of teaching. The school is particularly successful in pupils' personal development and well-being. Behaviour is exemplary; pupils are courteous, polite and well meaning towards each other. This is largely due to the excellent role models provided by the school staff, and the very high expectations that are consistently applied throughout the school. The school successfully encourages the pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. These are features which are highly regarded and appreciated by parents.

The quality of education offered in the Foundation Stage is good. Factors which contribute to this are good teaching, very good personal development and a high quality of care.

Development planning guides the work of the school, but it does not always include sharp enough criteria whereby it can gauge how successful it has been. However, since the last inspection the standards of attainment in ICT have been raised substantially. This has been achieved through systematic targeted plans, which have drawn upon the guidance of the local education authority to very good effect. The school is now regarded as an example of very good practice in this area. ICT is used extensively across much of the curriculum. The governors have secured major building improvements to provide modern spacious accommodation which will be completed in the near future, and this will further develop the quality of education. Better links with the pre-school providers have been established, though there is further progress to make in this area. The school has a strong capacity to improve still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create more opportunities for subject leaders to observe teaching and learning in the classroom
- Include clear targets for improvement in development plans to be able to gauge success more precisely
- Continue to work with the variety of pre-school providers, so that the school has the most up to date and appropriate information about pupils transferring to the school

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

- Many pupils enter Reception with skills above those found nationally, though there are a significant number with average abilities. They make good progress overall and most achieve or exceed the expectations for this age group.
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- Standards attained by pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are high. By the age of seven, standards are above average overall, and the highest attaining pupils achieve very well. This is the result of a sustained trend of improvement in standards during recent years. By the age of eleven, standards are well above average overall. In Key Stage 2 standards have shown continuous improvement trends.
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- Pupils' overall progress is good. This is largely due to the good and sometimes excellent quality of teaching, and the way the most effective teaching capitalises on the information on pupils' previous learning and achievements to set interesting and challenging activities. Effective use is made of setting targets for pupils' learning, which are known and understood by the pupils themselves.
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Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school clearly articulates its Catholic ethos, which is inclusive and supportive of all pupils. As a result the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its pupils is good. However, the school is aware of the need to develop more fully its multi-cultural dimension through the local network school scheme.

Behaviour is outstanding. This is exemplified by the way pupils show their concern for each other, respond to adults, and exercise responsibility around the school and in lessons. The promotion of a healthy lifestyle, linked to a healthy and safe environment, has come about through initiatives from the recently-formed school council, backed by staff and management.

Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are happy to come to school, enjoy lessons and feel safe. Parents have confirmed this. Developing the pupils' sense of well-being and safety begins as soon as they enter the Foundation Stage, and continues all the way through the school. Because of effective teaching and the involvement of the school council, awareness of healthy lifestyles is a strong feature. There is a high level of engagement with the local community and parishes. The positive attitudes to learning and working with others prepare pupils well for transfer to secondary school and the world of work in adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning in the school ranges from good to excellent. In the best lessons, the teachers are effective in providing challenging activities for the range of ability in the class, including those pupils with particular learning needs. Such approaches enable learners to make good progress and develop good attitudes towards their work. Most lessons are characterised by exciting activities based on thorough knowledge of what pupils can do, including those with additional learning needs. In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils actively worked outdoors to simulate the flow of electricity; they quickly moved indoors to use appropriate apparatus. Excellent use of ICT then allowed the teacher to make instant assessment of the pupils' learning, illustrated on the interactive whiteboard. Teachers motivate and involve pupils by setting challenging tasks which enable them to make good progress. A contributory factor which supports good teaching is the effective deployment of knowledgeable and informed learning assistants. Parental responses speak very highly of teachers in the school, and there are good relationships in supporting parents to help their pupils to succeed.

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Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum fully delivers the pupils' entitlement and meets statutory requirements. Provision for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science is good. The school successfully promotes education for safety and health. It makes good use of the adjacent parish church, and has strong links with the parish and external bodies. It has been greatly enriched by the recent introduction of modern foreign languages, which contribute further to pupils' enjoyment and sense of achievement. The school has successfully developed the use of ICT to extend and vary the activities teachers can offer, and to support and enhance pupils' learning. Links between other subjects are developing.

There is a wide range of extra activities, which are much appreciated by the pupils. The school is successful in developing their initiative and self-confidence through the extensive opportunities for participation. Of particular note is the development of the school garden, which allows pupils to see the practical results of their labours.

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Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Child protection procedures are in place, the headteacher being the designated co-ordinator. She knows the name and nature of every child and demonstrates, along

with the other members of staff, a high degree of care for each individual. Risk assessments are carefully considered. There are good relationships with parents and carers.

There are several outstanding features of this aspect of the school. The school council has been an effective means for pupils' self-development in that they begin to understand about democracy and their ability to effect change. There has been a total revision of the content of school meals and relaxed communal eating is promoted with an emphasis on a pleasant environment and good table manners. The caring ethos is further exemplified by the way older pupils support and help the younger pupils as "buddies".

Pupils receive a good induction into the school reception class. Parental responses highlight how quickly their children settle down. A similarly good system eases the transfer of Year 6 pupils to the local Catholic secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is successful and effective. She is well supported by her deputy, staff and governors in raising standards, improving teaching and creating a culture of mutual respect. There is strong commitment from the staff, who share the headteacher's vision. The school's self-evaluation is an accurate reflection of its performance and the management team is aware of the school's main strengths and areas for development. The school development plan gives clear direction and guides the actions needed to deal with the identified priorities. As yet these do not include opportunities for subject leaders to improve their knowledge about the quality of teaching and the success of initiatives is not always linked to measurable targets. So although the school is successful, it is not always aware of the full impact of the initiatives it puts into place.

Communication with parents, governors and pupils is very good. Great effort is made to obtain their views which are valued and acted upon. Many parents strongly expressed their high regard for the school and all its staff. Pupils are well taught, feel safe and achieve well. Day to day running of the school is efficient and effective. Resources are used well and deployed effectively including the very good skilled and experienced support staff. The school's actions to improve ICT demonstrates its capacity to bring about further improvement. Additional resources are drawn upon. These include government grants, which together with staff enthusiasm and expertise, and good advice from the local authority and governors, improve provision. As a result, the school is able to demonstrate gains in attainment for pupils. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and are effective in acting as a critical friend. To support them in their role the headteacher and the LEA keep them informed of developments. The governing body is very knowledgeable about the school and pupils' performance. It supports the headteacher at all levels and helps shape the strategic management of the school. Overall, the leadership and management provide the school with a good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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7 October 2005

Dear Pupils,

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently and we would like to thank you for talking to us and making us feel so welcome.

We looked at many of the things you do in school and talked with your teachers and some of the people who help you. We thought that you behaved very well and we could tell that you and your families are very proud of the school. These are some of the things that we really liked:

The people in school work very closely with your parents to make sure that you are safe, well cared for and happy when you come to school. Many of you spoke to us about this, so we know you agree.

There are lots of interesting activities for you to do, including after-school clubs, and lessons are interesting and well taught.

You enjoy being with each other and get on well with the adults in school, you are trying hard to be healthy and eat sensibly.

We have asked your headteacher to arrange for your teachers to observe everyone in your classes. We know that you will continue to work hard when this happens. This will help them to be clear about how they can measure the ways in which the school develops. We have also asked them to continue to work with the nurseries, playgroups and childminders in your area so that when you come to school you get the best possible start.

Your sincerely

John Coleman HMI

Annex B