



SS Osmund and Andrew RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 134237
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 282504
Inspection dates 1 March 2006 to 2 March 2006
Reporting inspector Ms Susan Clipson-Boyles HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blenheim Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Brightmet
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Bolton, Lancashire BL2 6EL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 333070
Number on roll	380	Fax number	01204 333071
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Hill
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mr John Thorpe

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

SS Osmund and Andrew's RC Primary School opened in September 2003 following the amalgamation of two former Catholic primary schools. It is currently situated on the original sites which are almost one mile apart in the Brightmet area of Bolton. One site has pupils from 3-11 years, the other provides for 4-11 year olds and also houses a private nursery. Most parents choose the site closest to where they live.

This is a larger primary school than average. Pupils come from a wide variety of social backgrounds. The majority are of white British background plus a growing number of Traveller children and asylum seekers. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the average as is the proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A significant number of children enter the early years classes with below average level skills.

The school is part of the Bolton Excellence Cluster and the East Bolton Regeneration Area from which it draws additional support.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Most children make good progress and reach standards that are above average. Effective teaching and a vibrant curriculum support children's enjoyment of school, which is reflected in their positive attitudes, behaviour and attendance. However, a number of children are persistently late for school.

There is a warm family feel to the school. Each child is fully included in what is offered. Excellent relationships with parents and useful links with outside specialists help to promote children's well-being. The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. They make very good progress and attain standards that are above those expected for their age.

The amalgamation caused considerable change and disruption. However, the headteacher has provided very good leadership, and the commitment of staff has ensured that children have continued to make good progress. Standards are above average and improving year on year. Ways of doing things vary between the two sites. There are good reasons for these differences, and decisions to vary the approaches have been reached carefully. However, not all children have the same choices of provision, particularly children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Therefore, there is still work to do to create the feeling of a single school in preparation for the move to a new site next year.

Expenditure is well managed and the quality of the school's provision and performance mean it provides very good value for money. The senior management team has evaluated the school's strengths and weaknesses accurately and identified many areas for improvement that they wish to tackle next. However, these will need to be prioritised in order to ensure most effective use of everyone's energies. Middle managers are not yet fully effective, but the school is nevertheless capable of moving from strength to strength.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the school's evaluation of its own performance leads to a more focused plan of actions to raise standards.
- Develop a stronger middle management team that will strengthen communication and curriculum monitoring.
- Ensure that children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have equality of opportunity, regardless of which site they are taught on.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school's view that children achieve well is justified. In the nursery and Reception classes the children are given an excellent start. A large number of children begin this stage with weaker skills than usually seen in children of this age. They make excellent progress and by the end of the Reception year, many exceed the learning goals expected

for their age. For example, many produce well-constructed sentences when writing their own story books. Good progress continues during Years 1 and 2 so that children attain slightly above average standards in the national reading, writing and mathematics tests. In 2005, writing improved significantly. During Years 3 - 6, children continue to make good progress. Year 6 children's national test results are above average, meeting the challenging targets set by the school. Standards in mathematics are especially high. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is rising. A variety of strategies are in place to support these children and these are working well. However, approaches vary between sites so the same choices are not available to all. Individual children who may be at risk of underachievement are identified early and their progress is carefully tracked so they can receive the support needed to ensure good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children are very interested in their learning and they enjoy school. They work hard in lessons and behave very well. Although attendance is a little above the national average a significant number of children do not always arrive on time.

Children's spiritual development is good. They learn to value themselves and each other. Their social and moral awareness develop well, and they appreciate the richness of their own and other cultures. Children have a good understanding of health and personal safety. They are enthusiastic about the sports activities after school and make healthy eating choices at lunchtime. They understand how to protect themselves against hazards surrounding drugs, tobacco and other substances. They learn about and discuss physical changes that occur during adolescence and the value of secure relationships.

By taking on responsibilities as play leaders, playground buddies, monitors or serving on the school council children develop life skills that help them contribute to the wider community. The basic skills of numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed well providing a strong foundation for children's future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are of good quality. Most lessons are lively and interesting so pupils respond well. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and question children skilfully to find out what they know and what they still need to learn. Their approaches create good relationships. Classrooms are colourful and stimulating, and there is also a calm, orderly atmosphere. These strengths mean that children enjoy learning and most make good progress during lessons. This was seen in a literacy lesson when pupils were excitedly using laptop computers to follow instructions from a highly competent fellow

pupil. Support staff are very skilled in promoting the learning of individuals and small groups. They boost progress considerably. Parents believe teaching is good and they feel fully involved in their children's learning. Teachers assess children's progress effectively and gain an accurate picture of achievement which they use to target the next stages of learning. This tracking system is used well to plan future learning and ensures that the work children are given to do meets their needs. Those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and well supported.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. Children often have fun while they are learning, as in the impressive costume parade for World Book Day enjoyed by pupils, staff and inspectors! The curriculum is inclusive and effectively planned to help children of all ages and abilities build skills and knowledge step by step. ICT is used well to enhance teaching and learning and interactive whiteboards are used to make learning interesting and enjoyable. Children have access to laptop computers and the internet and they send messages from one school site to another by email. They have also just started to use video conferencing. The English curriculum is of good quality and provides excellent speaking and listening opportunities. For example, a drama lesson about Macbeth was obviously thrilling children in Year 3 and Year 4. Physical activity has a high profile in school and this is enhanced by visitors from a range of premier sporting clubs. Activities outside lessons are good in range and quality. These are well attended and much appreciated by parents. The pursuit of healthy lifestyles is included in personal and social education and pupils are well prepared for the future. Suitable programmes of work and special opportunities are planned for pupils with special gifts and talents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for and supported. Parents compliment staff on the way they provide children with the help they need. There are robust procedures to ensure a safe and healthy environment so that children feel secure and happy to come to school. Risk assessments are undertaken before school outings and regular maintenance checks are carried out on buildings. Child protection systems are well established and all staff are aware of the appropriate policies. Staff know children well and build trusting relationships through which all feel valued and respected. Those who have more specific additional needs are sensitively provided with the necessary pastoral and academic support.

Tracking of children's progress and achievement are rigorous to make sure targets are being met. The school is quick to intervene where the need for additional help is identified. Children agree that teachers' marking is helpful because it helps them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has provided extremely strong leadership during a difficult time of change. He has been well supported by two deputies. They have created a senior management team that provides clear direction for staff and pupils on both sites. They inspire a strong sense of purpose and pride in the way the school operates so children are well cared for and achieve good results in their everyday work as well as in tests. Standards are rising. Spiritual leadership is exemplary and leads to a caring family atmosphere. The governors provide good support and challenge for the school. They bring a range of skills and monitor progress regularly. Financial matters are well managed and the school provides very good value for money.

The amalgamation has meant that subject leader roles have changed. There have been some difficulties caused by the school operating on two separate sites and subject leadership is not yet fully effective.

The school has accurately evaluated how effective it is in all areas and staff and governors know where improvements are needed. The cycle of evaluation and improvement could be further strengthened by involving a wider range of people in the process.

Parents have overwhelmingly positive views about the school and are very supportive. The openness of staff and parents mean that problems are sorted out quickly in the early stages. This reflects the excellent relationships that exist and the school's high regard in the community. The school is due to come together onto one site in 2007 and has the capacity to do this very successfully.

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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	1	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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	2	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?	2	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	3	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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed watching your lessons and listening to your opinions about the school. We are very grateful for your help. We think that your school is a good school. These are some of the things that we like.

- Your teachers help you to learn well, so you make good progress all through the school.
- Lots of lessons are fun so you enjoy learning.
- Staff take good care of you and help you to develop into kind and caring young people
- Your behaviour is very good in lessons and around school, and you play well together outside.
- You tell us that you feel safe and happy in school, and you know how to make healthy choices.

We have asked your headteacher, governors and staff to look at some other things that we think will help your school become even better.

- When Mr Thorpe and the teachers are planning how to improve the school each year we would like them to choose the things that will help you most so that everyone knows the plan.
- We think that the teachers who look after special subjects should look at all the teachers' work more often so that they can share ideas and plans. This will also help them to check that you are all doing your very best work on both sites.
- For those of you who need extra help with your lessons, we would like the systems from both sites to be shared so that teachers have more choices to help you.
- Some of you are late for school rather too often and we are worried that this may mean you get behind with your work. So we would like you to make a special effort to get there on time.

We wish you every success as your school continues to grow and develop and hope that our points will help you.