



St Joseph and St Bede Roman Catholic Primary School, Bury

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 105336
Local Authority Bury
Inspection number 287200
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Danesmoor Drive
School category	Voluntary aided		Bury
Age range of pupils	5–11		Lancashire BL9 6ER
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7643781
Number on roll (school)	348	Fax number	0161 7636238
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mary McGrail
		Headteacher	Miss Sue McAvady
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
5–11	17–18 January 2007	287200

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all pupils come from a White British background to this larger than average school. Numbers have increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families has also increased but is still below average. All 23 of these pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average and the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

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 with some outstanding features. It enables pupils to achieve well both socially and academically. It has maintained the excellent partnership with parents reported in the previous inspection, and this has a significant impact on pupils' learning. The school has effective provision to support those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and as a result the number on its register has been reduced. The school evaluates its own quality accurately on the whole. It provides good value for money.

Pupils' personal development is good, overall. Their spiritual, moral and social development is a particular strength. Along with the outstanding level of care, guidance and support they receive, it is easy to see why pupils feel safe and secure. They really enjoy being at school and their behaviour in class and around school is excellent. Attendance is average. The school, with the support of the local authority welfare officer, has implemented effective procedures to encourage and reward attendance, and as a result, it is improving.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the expertise of staff and the high level of support from parent volunteers who make a significant contribution, especially in Nursery. Consequently, children achieve very well. In Years 1 to 6, teaching is good and on occasions outstanding, enabling pupils to make good progress as they move through the school.

At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average overall. Much emphasis has been given to improving basic skills, especially in mathematics in Year 6 where pupils' performance has been generally below that in English and science. Higher-attaining pupils benefit from their own individual education plans and like all pupils, following discussions with the headteacher, they are aware of the targets expected of them. This helps them to make good progress. Although strategies to improve standards in mathematics have resulted in more pupils attaining at the higher Level 5, not enough pupils are reaching expected levels in this subject compared to English and science.

The curriculum is good. It promotes good achievement and learning with enjoyment. Particularly strong features are the quality and range of music tuition available to help pupils learn to play an instrument, and very good use of computers and the new interactive whiteboards to support and enhance learning in all subjects. There is a wide range of after-school clubs and these contribute much to pupils' personal development.

Leadership and management are good overall, with an outstanding feature being the leadership of the exceptionally dedicated and hard-working headteacher. Staff work effectively in teams to address identified areas for improvement with each team being specially formed to ensure the required level of subject knowledge and expertise. As a result, decisive action is taken to address issues such as the quality of marking, use of the new interactive whiteboards and raising standards in mathematics. However, at present the headteacher and two senior staff mainly carry out much of the routine monitoring to judge the school's effectiveness. All staff are not routinely monitoring

the quality of provision, and its impact on pupils' learning in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not yet fully established.

Governors are led well by a knowledgeable and extremely conscientious chair of governors. They are keen to further develop their role in monitoring the school's effectiveness; this role is currently underdeveloped. The school has a good capacity to further improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that all staff and governors are involved in monitoring the effectiveness of provision in order to improve further the standards and quality of education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The attainment of children when they enter the Nursery class is below that expected for their age. The Nursery is the jewel in the school's crown. Staff are supported by large numbers of parent volunteers and the close attention provided for children ensures that they settle quickly and make excellent progress. Children's rapid progress continues in Reception due to the enthusiasm and expertise of staff. Almost all children reach the standards expected of them by the end of Reception.

Pupils make good progress and achieve well in Years 1 to 6. Standards overall are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. By Year 6, while standards in mathematics are broadly average, English and science are above average. The most recent 2006 national test results showed an improvement in the number of pupils attaining at the higher level expected of them, reflecting the success of the school's strategies to ensure that higher-attaining pupils achieve their potential. Not enough pupils, however, reached the expected level. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because they benefit from the high quality support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language also make good progress because of the close adult support is made available for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Attendance is average. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding. As a result, pupils enjoy all aspects of school. They behave extremely well in lessons and around the school. Their outstanding behaviour and very positive attitudes are important factors in helping them to reach good standards and to achieve well. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, with knowledge and understanding of their own culture being stronger than that of the traditions and beliefs of the diverse cultures within British society.

Pupils learn how to stay safe and develop a very good understanding of the importance of staying healthy by eating a balanced diet, drinking water and keeping fit. Those involved in the school council make a good contribution to the school community. All pupils make a good contribution to the school and to the wider community through their involvement in school and parish events, including donations to charities. Pupils are prepared well for the future because they achieve well and have opportunities to work together productively, for example when Year 5 pupils shared their ideas about punctuation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching enables pupils to learn at a good pace. The quality of teaching and learning seen during the inspection was never less than good and was sometimes outstanding. Teachers plan effectively, making sure that activities are closely matched to pupils' ability. They plan carefully together so that pupils of the same age in different classes have similar learning experiences. Teachers know how well pupils are doing because of effective assessment procedures. They use this information well to plan work that challenges pupils at all ability levels. Consequently, pupils learn well because they are provided with interesting work which makes them concentrate hard in lessons. Their learning is very well supported by the way that teachers consistently ensure good behaviour. In some mathematics lessons, however, teachers make too much use of worksheets and this does not promote pupils' ability to record or organise their own work well enough. Teachers too often accept untidy worksheets or work in exercise books and this affects the quality of pupils' work.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is outstanding because of the teachers' commitment and understanding, the high quality of support staff and the number and quality of parent helpers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is outstanding with the spacious outdoor areas being used effectively to add further valuable and exciting learning experiences for children. In the rest of the school, the curriculum is well matched to pupils' needs and builds effectively on their existing knowledge and understanding. Consequently, work is sufficiently challenging and all usually make good progress. The school has identified a number of pupils who are doing particularly well and offers these pupils work at a high level: for example, science classes in conjunction with a local secondary school. There is a due concentration on English and mathematics and this supports good achievement for most pupils.

The curriculum is enriched by a good range of activities outside lessons. These include sporting and cultural activities as well as opportunities, taken up by a good number

of pupils, to learn a musical instrument. The curriculum is effective in helping pupils to understand how to lead healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Pupils benefit from a very good range of visits to places of educational interest, and visitors to school make the curriculum more interesting and enjoyable.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All aspects of provision for care, support and guidance are outstanding and this matches the school's own evaluation. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. Very good attention is paid to health and safety as well as promoting a healthy lifestyle. The children and staff are rightly proud of their success in a recent road safety competition to become the National Kerb Craft winners. Teachers are very aware of the needs of individual pupils, and those who are new to the school are offered sensitive help to settle quickly and to learn to speak English confidently where necessary. In this safe, secure environment, all pupils thrive.

Pupils care for each other exceptionally well. The school council ensures that there are many positive and happy occasions to celebrate that are in keeping with the Catholic character of the school. The school works very well with other agencies and with parents to enable pupils to make good progress. The excellent home-school partnership, described in the previous inspection, has been maintained. Parents are very supportive of all the school does and this impacts strongly on their children's learning. The support staff are a strength of the school and many parents volunteer to work alongside them, enhancing their own skills and adding to their qualifications. After individual discussions with the headteacher, most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the highest attainers, are clear about their targets for learning and this helps them to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

'Hats off to the staff for their dedication' reflects the level of appreciation by parents and their positive views about the school and how well it is led and managed. Overall, leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported effectively by two assistant headteachers, is an outstanding leader and is largely responsible for developing and maintaining the excellent home-school partnership and outstanding level of care for individual pupils. These aspects make a major contribution to the quality of pupils' learning and their outstanding behaviour.

The school is developing an innovative approach to subject management and selects a team with the required expertise to tackle identified areas for development. Staff share responsibility for identifying priorities and as a result, the school has a clear view of its performance in English, mathematics and science and what needs to be improved. However, monitoring the effectiveness of provision to assess the level of improvement is mostly undertaken by the headteacher and two assistant headteachers at present. Routine and regular monitoring by all staff of the quality of provision and its impact

on pupils' learning in other subjects is not yet fully established. The detailed analysis of provision in geography last year was an isolated example of effective monitoring. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive with 100% attendance at most meetings. They are led effectively by a knowledgeable chair of governors who regularly undertakes a detailed analysis of different aspects to find out where the school's effectiveness can be improved. Other governors, however, are not sufficiently involved in the process of monitoring school effectiveness.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome! We really enjoyed talking to you all and looking at your work. These are the particularly good things about your school.

- Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to help you to enjoy being at school and to give you exciting and interesting things to do.
- You all behave very well in class and around school.
- You all have a good start in Nursery and Reception with lots of interesting things to do. It was thoughtful of you in Nursery to make seed cakes for the birds and the inspection team loved their marshmallow cakes from Reception.
- There are many things for you to enjoy after school. It is good to see so many of you learning to play a musical instrument.
- All of you are cared for very well and supported by your teachers, classroom assistants and the lunchtime staff. No wonder you enjoy school so much.

We are asking everyone at school to concentrate on doing something about these things:

- improving standards in mathematics by Year 6
- asking all your teachers and the governors to check more thoroughly on how well the school is doing, to help it to improve further.

Thank you again for helping us with this inspection. We hope that you will carry on enjoying your schoolwork and try to be a bit more careful when filling in answers on worksheets or writing in your books. We are sure you can do it much more neatly. You are right to be proud of your school because it is a good one.