

St Peter's Roman Catholic Primary School, Blackburn

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119514
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313321
Inspection date	30 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Mark Williams 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 on roll	
School	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Father Stephen Doyle
Headteacher	Mr Michael Duxbury
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2005
School address	Watson Street Blackburn Lancashire BB2 2RH
Telephone number	01254 57841
Fax number	01254 672885

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how well the more able pupils in Key Stage 1 were progressing, whether or not all pupils were making good progress in their personal development and well-being, and how well the curriculum throughout the school meets the needs of all pupils.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors, and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average size primary school with pupils from mixed socio-economic backgrounds. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There is an increasing proportion from Eastern European backgrounds with some two and half percent who do not have English as their first language. While the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average for England, the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is greater. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. The school is due to move to a new site in late spring 2008.

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. Its strong Christian faith is at the heart of all it does. The school benefits from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher. As a result of the very clear direction he has set, the standards pupils achieve at the end of Key Stage 2 have for a number of years been very high. The attributes pupils demonstrate in their personal development and well-being are outstanding.

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. During Key Stage 1 they reach standards that are broadly in line with the average for England. This represents satisfactory progress. The school has recognised that its higher ability pupils have not always achieved as well as they ought in writing and mathematics. The needs of these pupils are now increasingly and more successfully met through better identification, targeted group work and more challenging activities. Pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is very good. Over the last three years pupils have attained consistently high results in the national tests in mathematics. The overall progress made by pupils in 2007 was outstanding, particularly in English. This was the result of a clear drive to improve pupils' writing. Pupils' current work, as seen in their books, points to high standards being attained. However, despite the appropriate and strong focus on writing, its impact on the current Year 6 pupils, particularly those of higher ability, is less secure. The percentage of pupils predicted to achieve the higher Level 5 in the national tests in 2008 is not as high as the original target set. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. This is because of excellent provision which meets their needs well, for example the regular small group activities to improve pupils' skills in reading, spelling and physical coordination.

The pupils are a credit to the school. Nearly all who were spoken to were excited about what the school offers. Their attendance is good and their behaviour excellent. They are sensible and polite. The school council is developing well and is respected by pupils throughout the school. Some of its actions and decisions reflect pupils' very positive attitudes to staying healthy. For example, the council has been instrumental in introducing the 'Fruity Friday' healthiest class award. It also sensibly rejected a request to open a sweet counter, stating this was not in keeping with being a Healthy School. The quality of discussions pupils have with each other is very good. Pupils in Year 4, for example, worked in small groups to debate whether or not attending school on a Saturday morning would be beneficial to them. While, not surprisingly, a majority said 'no', the arguments for and against were persuasive. Likewise in Year 5, pupils demonstrated good teamwork when seeking to solve the mystery of who caused damage to the toilets. Further discussions with pupils highlight their very good awareness of cultures other than their own, particularly within the Blackburn area.

The very positive outcomes in pupils' learning and personal development are the result of strengths in the curriculum, in teaching, and in the quality of care, guidance and support provided. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of learners well. The emphasis on literacy and numeracy and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Overall, the curriculum is enhanced well by visits from specialists and focused activities such as Art days. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Key features of teaching include high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teachers ensure these expectations are understood in lessons by making clear to pupils what the success criteria they will be judged on are. The result of clear success criteria is that pupils know their targets and are becoming more confident in understanding what they need to do to achieve them. Pupils

with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive excellent levels of care, guidance and support.

Leadership is good, overall. The headteacher has gelled the school together well following the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools. His leadership is outstanding and is enabling other leaders to have an increasingly positive role throughout the school. The school is managed well on a day to day basis and is on course to move smoothly to its new purpose built building in late Spring 2008. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements. Over 200 parents/carers responded to the inspection questionnaire. Some 95% were very positive about the work of the school and the confidence they have in it. Such confidence is justified as the school has good governance, knows its strengths and areas for improvement, deploys resources effectively and ensures its pupils achieve well. Its capacity to improve is excellent.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The good quality provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) enables the children to make a good start to life at school. The children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age, although these have declined in recent years. Good teaching focuses on the differing needs of children well. Staff make good use of the bright, colourful classrooms and through interesting and stimulating activities, Chinese New Year for example, ensure children develop well in all aspects of early learning. The result is that most children enter Year 1 working within or exceeding the national early learning goals.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop provision for higher ability pupils so they achieve as well as they can.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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?	2

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

1 May 2008

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for your very warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed visiting all your classes and talking with you. I could see clearly that your school is a good school. I liked these things in particular:

- you achieve well in your learning
- you are a credit to the school. You are polite and sensible
- your school council makes good decisions, 'Fruity Fridays' for example
- your very good awareness of cultures other than your own, particularly within this locality.

I liked these things so much, I have judged your personal development and well-being to be outstanding. Well done! You will be aware, though, good things don't just happen. They happen because people work very hard. This is especially true in your school. Your headteacher provides outstanding leadership and has put together a good team. As a result teaching at your school is good, as is the curriculum and the care, guidance and support given to you. I could see this particularly in the high expectations all staff have of you and the way they use success criteria to help you know how well you have achieved. I could also see that pupils who have difficulties receive excellent support and make outstanding progress.

So what can your school do to become even better? It is clear to me that work has begun with pupils with higher abilities to challenge them in their learning. I am asking your school to further develop its work with these pupils so they achieve as well as they can.

There are exciting times ahead for you. Very soon you are going to move into your brand new building, complete with specialist rooms for expressive arts. Wow! I wish you all every success in your new building and for the future. I just wonder, though, if Year 4 pupils really do want to attend on Saturday mornings too!!!

Every blessing

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector