

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Osbaldeston

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119647
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313371
Inspection dates	13–14 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon C. A. Doran
Headteacher	Mrs Judith Metcalfe
Date of previous school inspection	1 December 2007
School address	Longsight Road Osbaldeston Blackburn Lancashire BB2 7HX
Telephone number	01254 812543
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary is a very small school in a semi-rural area where socio-economic conditions are above average. There are no pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of those from minority ethnic heritages, none are at the early stages of learning English. The school has been awarded Bronze Level Eco Status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is a good school. It provides good teaching and learning, an effective curriculum and good care, support and guidance. Leadership and management are also good. As a result, pupils achieve well and their personal development is assured. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, although rather modest in its judgements. It has effectively addressed all issues identified at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils, church and parents hold the school in very high esteem. There are many comments made about its warm, family atmosphere, 'where children flourish'. Parents appreciate the teaching and care their children receive and comment on 'the excellent communication channels', 'the approachable staff' and the support for pupils with special needs. 'Wonderful school' and 'fantastic school' are typical of the many responses.

Children enter Reception with skills typical for their age. They develop these at a steady rate and by the end of Reception their overall attainment is as expected for this age group. Satisfactory progress continues throughout the infant years and by the end of Year 2, pupils reach broadly average standards. Standards in writing, particularly for the more able pupils, are below the levels of reading and mathematics. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they are performing above expected levels in all subjects but with writing nearer the national average. This represents good achievement and results from better tracking of pupil progress, more focussed teaching and effective staff development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully integrated into school life and achieve as well as most other pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. The warm and very caring nature of the school community nurtures pupils' personal development and they respond very positively to staff expectations of effort and involvement. Pupils know how to stay healthy, safe and happy; they love participating in after-school clubs and are very active in community and church events. Good levels of personal skills and improving academic results prepare pupils well for the future. A good curriculum with special interest weeks and an exciting range of visits and visitors enhances pupils' enjoyment whilst good levels of care, support and guidance enhance their achievement.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher promotes the school's values very effectively and leads not only by example but through the development of staff and governors working in a strong team. This leadership team has been particularly successful in the last two years. They have raised achievement; staffing issues have been resolved, resources have been enhanced and initiatives to improve staff effectiveness have been well supported. The school has a good capacity for further improvement and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good Foundation Stage provision ensures that children are now making better progress. They begin school with a range of skills, broadly typical for this age group. By the end of Reception the majority will reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, with a small number exceeding them. Children enter Reception from several nurseries but quickly adapt, making new friendships and growing in confidence. This is because of good organisation, well-established routines and good relationships, particularly with Year 6 learning partners, who give regular weekly support

during joint projects. Staff are highly enthusiastic and work well together, providing a wide range of interesting activities, both inside and outside the classroom. Basic skills and courtesy are well taught; personal, social and emotional development is given priority. Induction is well managed and staff provide good standards of care and guidance. The school maintains a good relationship with parents, keeping them informed of their child's progress, along with curricular materials so that they can support their child's learning at home. Reception children integrate well in a mixed class of Key Stage 1 pupils whilst good leadership and management ensure that teaching and learning are appropriate to children's interests and needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing across the school and give pupils opportunities to use their writing in subjects other than English.
- Improve provision for the more able pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are generally above average and pupils' achievement is good. The current Reception class entered school with skills typical for this age group and many are on task to achieve the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. In previous years there have been fluctuations, where skills on entry were below those expected. Generally, pupils make steady progress through Reception and Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average. This is reflected in the 2007 Key Stage 1 results, which were an improvement on those of 2006. This improvement resulted from more focussed teaching and learning and much improved progress tracking. These developments have since been consolidated and most pupils in Year 2 are currently working at expected levels, although writing still lags behind reading, particularly for the more able pupils.

In Key Stage 2 achievement is good, with many pupils already working beyond expected levels. Pupils in Year 6 are now on course to meet challenging targets in national tests at the end of the year. This represents good progress from their starting points in Reception. In 2007, Key Stage 2 national test results showed the school had reached above average standards in mathematics and science, with broadly average standards in English. These results were much better than the previous year owing to training initiatives in mathematics and improved match of work to ability. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils because of the school's successful inclusion policies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is excellent. They think their teachers make learning fun; they love the wide range of after-school activities; they also appreciate the exciting school grounds, which incorporate their own ideas. Pupils feel very safe in school because there is little or no bullying and staff always treat them fairly. Pupils know how to maintain their safety. They recognise that the Internet can be dangerous and know the school's procedures to protect them. Health education is very secure: pupils know the importance of nutritious food and exercise for a healthy lifestyle and understand the dangers of drug and alcohol misuse. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Pupils enjoy attending a school, where 'people are kind and everyone is friendly'. They help maintain this family atmosphere by taking responsibility seriously. Years 5 and 6 pupils act caringly as

learning mentors to Reception children. The school council represents the views of class members accurately whilst others decorate the library as well as ensuring its efficiency. All pupils experience organising events for charity fund raising. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. There are strong links between school and church and the school makes its Catholic values central to each day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Since 2005, teachers have monitored each others' lessons and scrutinised pupils' work and teachers' marking. Consequently, progression between classes is smoother, ideas are shared and there is more agreement about standards and expectations. Teachers have good subject knowledge and devise interesting activities, which sustain pupils' concentration. They encourage their pupils to evaluate work against particular criteria and thus develop their independence. When demonstrating quality features, teachers frequently use pupils' work as examples. This keeps pupils motivated and enhances individual self-esteem. Good relationships between pupils and staff ensure that pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. They also receive good individual support in lessons. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are confident participating alongside their peers. Teachers match questions to different abilities well and provide open-ended tasks so that all can contribute. There is, however, less use of different tasks to provide challenge, particularly for the more able pupils. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is encouraging and generally informative. Nevertheless, when marking writing tasks, further detail is required if pupils are to fully understand how they can improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum and other activities are good. Priority is given to mathematics and English; phonics is taught systematically. Pupils experience much investigational work in science. The school is currently reviewing its general curriculum to ensure pupils' interest, develop basic skills and make the best possible use of time. By organising special focus projects, such as 'The Book Week', the school gives particular subjects high profile, adding excitement and in-depth study. Speaking and listening have been enhanced across the curriculum often by the use of role-play whilst mathematics is used well to record statistical data. Opportunities for writing across the curriculum are not as well used. Consequently, pupils have limited opportunities to refine their skills in different contexts. Extension tasks for the more able child are infrequent across the curriculum, although they respond well to open-ended problems. Pupils experience a residential visit and have access to a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Spanish lessons are very popular with pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school has excellent procedures to protect pupils and safeguarding procedures are fully in place. Staff are trained and policies are updated regularly. Health and Safety arrangements are thorough and the local authority approves all risk assessments. All staff are able to provide basic first aid. Although there have been very

few incidents involving aggression and/or racist incidents the school maintains the necessary documentation. It also works well with outside agencies to provide additional support for pupils in need.

The school gives good guidance to parents so they can support their children's learning in the home. Pupils' personal development is well supported. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The headteacher has introduced an efficient system to track pupils' progress and as a result teaching is now more accurately targeted and standards have improved. Further developments are required to help the more able pupils reach challenging targets and to raise writing standards across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The excellent leadership of the headteacher provides a very caring and very clear vision for the school. She is highly committed to the improvement of the whole child and to the school's role in providing opportunities for lifelong learning. She ensures that staff receive the appropriate professional development and motivates them well to raise pupil aspirations and achievement. Since her appointment two years ago, staff are monitoring each others' teaching, analysing pupils' progress thoroughly and more accurately targeting their teaching to individual needs. This has resulted in improved standards, greater consistency in teaching and more effective cooperation between staff. A highly skilled post holder, who is currently leading curricular initiatives across the school, ably supports the headteacher.

Governance is good. Governors work as a committed team using their individual skills and expertise to fulfil clearly defined responsibilities. They are proud of their school's achievements and its very popular standing in the community. They also know its areas for development and have prioritised provision for the more able pupils and improving writing. They are confident the school will succeed whatever the challenge and work hard to ensure this by providing the best resources possible. To this end, governors are kept well informed by the headteacher, the local authority and by their own monitoring within the school. The leadership team of staff and governors have successfully enhanced the school's accommodation and grounds and are now working towards safer traffic conditions outside the school building.

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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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
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

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Osbaldeston, Lancashire, BB2 7HX

Thank you for being so courteous and friendly when I visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Your school is a good school and I now realise why it is so popular with you and your parents. You all get on very well together and receive lots of care and support from your teachers and other pupils. I appreciate why you enjoy your lessons. Your teachers certainly devise some interesting activities in all subjects. They are so enthusiastic and keen for you to succeed. When I examined your work I thought that most pupils had made good progress and were achieving well. You learn about so many different things. I know many of you appreciate special weeks like the Book Week. You like to concentrate on one subject and learn more fully about it. I also learned that you know how to keep yourselves healthy, safe and happy. You are very considerate of other people and I thought your behaviour during my visit was excellent.

I also noticed two ways in which your school could be even better and so I have asked your school to do the following: (You will be able to help with the first one!)

- Raise standards in writing across the school. You could help here by enjoying reading as a hobby.
- Improve provision for the more able pupils.

Thank-you for making my time with you so very pleasant and interesting.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Elton

Lead inspector