

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

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119649
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	327099
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Williams HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	205
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Joe Slater
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Jeff Brown (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Preston Old Road Feniscowles Blackburn Lancashire BB2 5EP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01254 201495

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2008
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**Fax number**

01254 209491

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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: whether or not there is sufficient challenge for the more able pupils throughout the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); are care, guidance and support, and the personal development and well-being of pupils strong enough to be outstanding; and are previous strengths in leadership and management at least maintained?

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils, parents 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

The school is similar in size to other primary schools and is slightly larger than at the time of the previous inspection. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion entitled to free school meals. Overall, pupils' abilities on entry to the school are above those normally found. The school is involved in a number of local initiatives and holds Investors in People status. At the time of this inspection the headteacher and deputy headteacher were on maternity leave. The acting headteacher, seconded from a school in a neighbouring local authority, has been in post since Easter 2008.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support lie at the heart of this successful school. As a result, pupils throughout the school make good progress in their learning. They consistently attain high standards in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are equally and consistently high. However, owing to national difficulties in Key Stage 2 assessments in 2008, it has not been possible to make judgements about these test results this year. Nonetheless, standards attained by pupils currently in this key stage, as seen in their work, have been maintained and remain high. Teaching is consistently good and promotes learning well. Staff know pupils well and, as a result, plan activities that engage pupils in their learning and ensure they are supported well. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to the school, not least in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In turn, these pupils make good progress. Outstanding features of teaching are evident, including the way teachers and assistants use questioning and prompting to extend pupils' understanding. An example of this was observed in a Year 6 mathematics lesson. Here the teacher checked pupils' understanding of factors and multiples, and had them explain their thinking to the rest of the class. The teaching assistant provided very good support to a number of pupils enabling them to participate fully in the lesson. Pupils' progress is tracked very well and marking is supportive and helpful. This assists pupils in taking the next steps in their learning. Progress is not only tracked in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, it is recorded in very useful portfolios, for example, in art and history. Despite pupils attaining high standards and making good progress, the school does not rest on its laurels. It recognises the need to provide even more challenge to the highest achievers. Overall levels of care are impressive. The school has, for example, responded well to the challenges of building work. Pupils report they are safe and very well looked after. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are included very well into the life of the school. This was evident in the start of the day 'wake and shake' session where teaching assistants' sensitive encouragement enabled these pupils to clap along and join in the dance. The pupils' sense of joy was seen in their faces and laughter. Mid-day assistants and office staff contribute to this care well to ensure the continued smooth running of the school. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

Pupils demonstrate outstanding attributes in their personal development and well-being. Their enthusiasm abounds and they enjoy school greatly. This is reflected in their excellent behaviour and good levels of attendance. They are a credit to their school and themselves. Motivated by the strong Christian ethos, all staff work hard and successfully and value pupils as individuals. This is evidenced by the very good, respectful relationships that exist throughout the school. Pupils are keen to demonstrate healthy lifestyle choices. They participate fully in a wide range of sporting activities, thoroughly enjoy the 'wake and shake' activities which they lead, and munch gleefully on a variety of fruit and vegetables. Already, the youngest children are able to identify healthy and not so healthy foods. Pupils' care and respect for one another are a strength and go beyond the boundaries of the school. Through cultural diversity weeks, for example, they understand, as one pupil put it, that it '...does not matter about creed or colour as similar feelings...' exist between them and different sections of the community both locally and abroad.

Over the last fourteen months there have been changes to leadership, mostly temporary. A few parents/carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire raised this as a concern. Overall, though, the quality of leadership identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. It

is good. Current leaders, building on previous strengths and a good governing body, have evaluated all aspects of the school's effectiveness entirely accurately. As a result, the school's priorities for the future are appropriate. Progress since the previous inspection has been good. Nonetheless, not all subject leaders have routinely had the opportunity to observe colleagues teach the foundation subjects across the school. School leaders recognise this is an area for development in order to strengthen an already good curriculum and provide opportunities for greater links between subjects. Most parents/carers are positive about the school and its work, typically commenting how happy their children are. A few reported that communication was not good. The inspection found good levels of communication through, for example, information evenings, regular newsletters and the school's website. Nevertheless, the school has recognised that the one parents' evening it held to discuss pupils' progress was insufficient and too late in the school year. As a result, an additional meeting earlier in the year is to be introduced. Despite the changes in leadership the school has continued to move forward. Its continuing high standards and pupils' outstanding personal development indicate its capacity for further improvement is good.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The EYFS is led well. A good team is being established. Children get a good start to life at school. This is because of good induction and the approachability of staff. Parents/carers typically report how well their children settle in and how much they enjoy school. Children get on very well together. Already they show increased levels of maturity through their sharing and taking turns. The classroom is organised well with good opportunities for children to learn through play. Outdoor provision is good. During the inspection very good use was made of the outdoor area by teaching assistants who took groups of children on a bear hunt. The children, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, thoroughly enjoyed squelching, oozing and squashing through the make believe forest and mud while the bear chased them. They were able to talk enthusiastically and confidently about their experience. Equally good use is made of indoor facilities. As a result of the good provision, children learn and develop well so that most enter Year 1 securely within the upper reaches of the Early Learning Goals.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

Leaders and governors should develop the school's existing strengths to:

- build upon the best practice in the school to provide even greater challenge to the most able learners;
- enhance the good curriculum and strengthen subject leaders' awareness of their areas by providing opportunities for them to observe teaching throughout the school.

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**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?</b>	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

25 September 2008

Dear Children

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

Thank you for the welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and watching you at work and play. I am pleased to say I agree with those who run the school that St Paul's is a good school with some aspects that are outstanding. These are some of the things that are good:

- the standards you reach and the progress you make in your learning
- the quality of teaching
- the interesting curriculum
- the way leaders and governors run the school.

These are outstanding features of which the school and you can be particularly proud:

- your behaviour and attitudes
- your enthusiasm for learning
- the way you make healthy choices
- the care, guidance and support adults give you
- the way in which you are valued as individuals.

I, like you, know your school wants to be even better. I agree with Mr Brown and the other leaders that even more challenge could be given to the most able pupils and the teachers responsible for subjects such as history, geography and art, for example, could observe more teaching of these subjects throughout the school.

I am confident that you will continue to work with the school in order to achieve the very best you can.

I wish you all well for the future.

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector