



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Medlar-with-Wesham

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119629
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280617
Inspection dates 16 November 2005 to 17 November 2005
Reporting inspector Moira Fitzpatrick

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Garstang Road North
School category	Community		Medlar-with-Wesham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Preston, Lancashire
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 683009
Number on roll	70	Fax number	01772 683009
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Denise Richardson
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Wright

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 16 November 2005 - 17 November 2005	Inspection number 280617
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

The school is much smaller than average, with 70 pupils aged between 4 and 11 years. It is situated in the village of Wesham, near Blackpool and pupils come entirely from a white British heritage. No pupils speak English as an additional language. Children start school with standards that are slightly below the average in all areas of learning. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is about average and so is the percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Currently there is one pupil with a statement of special educational need. The school's intake has declined since the last inspection and at the start of this term there was a reduction from four to three classes. In recent years the school has gained the Healthy Schools Award and the Investors in People Award. The school is outward looking, and its very good links with the parish, the wider community and other schools ensure that the school has good support for its work as well as access to further expertise and resources.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school that its effectiveness is good overall, and that the school gives good value for money. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The quality of care for children is outstanding, ensuring that they make a very good start to their schooling and learn well. Pupils make good progress in their learning from the time they start until they leave, with standards that are above the national average when they are in Year 6. While the boys achieve as well as most boys nationally, they do not achieve as well as the girls. The school rightly has defined this as an area of focus in its improvement plan for this year. Good teaching is based on very good monitoring of pupils' learning. The curriculum is varied and meets the needs of all pupils well. Pupils' personal development is good; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils enjoy school and show it by their good attendance. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's determination to maintain high standards despite any challenges the school might encounter is outstanding. The good improvement since the last inspection and current good standards reflect the strong capacity of the school to continue to improve.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise boys' achievement so it matches that of the girls.
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Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school's evaluation that standards and achievement are good. Children start school with standards that are slightly below the average in all areas of learning. They make good progress during their time in the Foundation Stage so that most children reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. At the end of Year 2 results in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently above the national average for the last three years. All pupils reach the nationally expected Level 2 in reading and writing and almost all reach this level in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make very good progress towards their targets. By Year 6, pupils have continued to achieve well and reach the targets set for them. In national tests they consistently achieve standards above the national average, and in the last two years have reached standards significantly above it. In some years, the achievement of boys is not as good as that of girls and the school has already begun to address this by, for example, arranging additional sessions of mathematics for some of the boys. The school's improvement in national tests has risen faster than the national trend at the end of both key stages in the last five years. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher level in national tests is well above the national average at both key stages in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school's judgement that this is good, but judges that some aspects are better than this. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. All pupils have a very well developed sense of their own worth, take delight in pursuing their curiosity and show sensitivity to the feelings and needs of others. Their cultural development is rich in knowledge and understanding of the diversity of cultures and traditions in our society. Pupils' good behaviour and consideration of others are shown by the support they give each other in and out of the classroom. They demonstrate their enjoyment of all that the school has to offer by their enthusiasm for learning and their good attendance, which is consistently above the national average. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities around the school and are frequently seen caring for and supporting younger pupils who delight in the attention of their 'big' friends. By Year 6 pupils are very well prepared for secondary school. All pupils know their views are valued. They express their ideas for improvement and voice their concerns through both the school council and the opportunities provided in circle time. Members of the school council are justly proud of the improvements made to playground facilities and in raising awareness of bullying issues. Pupils fully understand the importance of healthy living and staying safe. For example, older pupils have used the school council to request that fruit snacks be made available to them at playtime, as they are to younger children.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have risen extremely well to the challenges of managing learning in mixed age and cross-phase classes this term. Teaching is good because of the very good planning for groups and individuals that enables pupils of all abilities to learn well. Pupils say that teachers make learning fun. They use a wide range of different teaching methods, many of which allow pupils to learn from practical activities, such as travel surveys during mathematics lessons. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' interests to present learning in lively and stimulating ways. One Year 6 boy summed this up with his comment, 'The poetry we did was great – none of the boring stuff'. Because teachers make learning so interesting, pupils enjoy lessons and show high levels of enthusiasm about their learning. Teachers of all age groups have very high expectations of what pupils can do. Very good assessment procedures keep them well informed about pupils' progress, so they quickly spot when this has not been enough. If this occurs, then teachers take immediate action to provide additional support for these pupils. The system of tracking progress in reading, writing and mathematics is used very effectively to identify pupils needing additional support. This term, additional support for older pupils in reading has had a significant impact and their standards are quickly improving as a result.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The inspector does not agree with the school that the curriculum is satisfactory. It is good. All staff have risen very well to the challenges imposed by reducing the number of classes from four to three this year. Planning for mixed age classes is very good and takes account of different ages and needs well. The curriculum in the Reception and Year 1 is proving very beneficial to Year 1 pupils. They continue to enjoy learning through play for parts of the day, while Reception pupils have quickly picked up routines and are developing good independence through working alongside Year 1 pupils. In all classes the focus on planning for skills development leads to a better grasp of connections in learning for pupils, who have plenty of opportunities to apply their skills. The school's enrichment of learning through visits and visitors is impressive, with a wide range of exciting opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom. Provision for out-of-school clubs is satisfactory and expanding this term. The music, art, dance and drama event in the summer term involves the whole school in a week of multi-cultural activities when pupils of different ages learn together. A Year 6 pupil neatly described the experience as, 'Well good'. The school's involvement in the National Anti-Bullying Project is a typical response to the interests and needs of the pupils. The addition of French to the curriculum this term is much appreciated by pupils who enjoy learning through speaking and singing.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The inspector does not agree with the school's judgement that this aspect is good. It is outstanding. Comprehensive policies, procedures and risk assessments ensure pupils' health and safety are given high priority while they are at school. Registration procedures ensure that pupils are safe, while absences are pursued promptly. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic and personal development are excellent in their detail and in the use teachers make of information about pupils. They make a significant contribution to the high standards that pupils achieve. Pupils are clear about how they can improve because of the advice given by teachers. Pupils say they feel safe and secure because they have such good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. Parents are very pleased with how the school looks after their children both in helping them to succeed academically as well as socially.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The school's management of class reorganisation, due to a reduction in the number of pupils this term, has been excellent. The headteacher and deputy have worked very hard to ensure the best use of staff expertise for pupils' learning. Their curriculum reorganisation and timetabling have been meticulous and innovative. All pupils in each of the three classes make good

progress because staff are inspired to work extremely hard by the example set by the headteacher.

All teachers are involved in the school's rigorous evaluation of its work, and make a significant contribution to the school's continuous improvement. Because of this the school has improved well since the last inspection, with standards rising faster than the national trend. Governors play an active part in improving the school through good support and effective challenge. Parents' views are regularly sought and acted upon. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and have good opportunities for involvement in the school's work. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen quickly and been sustained at a high level. The quality of resources has improved significantly and this has made a contribution to the good standards achieved. Given the well-planned systems, the good quality improvement plan, together with the vision of the headteacher and commitment of staff, the school is in a strong position to improve further.

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	2	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	1	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?	1	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	2	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

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St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

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18 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. You were kind and helpful and told me many interesting things about your school.

Here are some of the things I liked best:

you enjoy your learning and love to have a go at difficult things

you all play together and look after each other

you behave well and always think of other people

your attendance, which is so important to your learning, is good

you show generosity and kindness in raising funds to help others

your headteacher, teachers and support teachers work hard to make sure you learn well and enjoy your time in school

you are learning to speak and understand French well. Well done!

I agree with you that your teachers look after you very well and make you feel safe and cared for in school.

I have asked your headteacher and teachers to make things even better by:

helping some of you to do even better in reading, writing and mathematics.

Thank you all again for your kindness during my visit.

Best wishes.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Moira Fitzpatrick

Lead inspector

Annex B