

The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119621
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339484
Inspection dates	17–18 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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 of pupils on the school roll	161
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Judith Broadbridge
Headteacher	Miss Anne Goddard
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed seven teachers and 12 lessons, and held meetings with the governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspector observed the school's work and analysed 96 questionnaires from parents and carers. The inspector also looked at documents and policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils, at the data the school had collected about pupils' progress and at the school's records of its monitoring of the quality of teaching.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress, especially in writing in Years 1 and 2
- how effectively teachers use assessment in lessons to help pupils to improve their work and involve them in assessing their own learning
- the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation by subject leaders, particularly in areas that are less strong.

Information about the school

This is a small school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, is average and increasing. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average; although those who have a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. A larger than usual number of pupils enters and leaves school during the year. The school has achieved the Activemark and the Healthy Schools Award for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Since the previous inspection, the number of staff has increased due to an increase in the number of pupils on the school roll.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school provides a good standard of education in a caring, family-like environment. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive and their views are summed up by the following comments, 'It's a fantastic school and the teachers are very helpful' and, 'There is a wonderful sense that children and parents belong to the "family" of the school.'

Children enter Reception with skills overall that are below those expected. They achieve well, reaching standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. Progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good, due to well-focused support they receive. An increasing number of pupils enter the school during the school year, many of whom speak English as an additional language. The school supports these pupils and their families particularly well. They are made to feel very welcome and quickly acquire the language skills to enable them to make good progress. Pupils are confident and polite. Many aspects of their personal development are good, including their understanding of a healthy lifestyle and their contribution to the community, both in school and in the town. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. While the spiritual element is particularly strong, their understanding of other cultures reflecting those found in the United Kingdom as a whole is not quite as well developed.

The headteacher provides very strong leadership and has the full support of her staff. They have a shared vision of the school, wanting the best for each pupil. The school knows its strengths and areas for development well. Strategies to address underachievement in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2, are having the desired impact and progress in writing has risen rapidly and is now good. The school has increasingly robust systems for monitoring how well pupils are achieving, but at present this information is not used well enough to ensure that all pupils consistently make good progress. Many subject leaders are relatively new in post and already playing an important part in monitoring in their areas. At present, they do not analyse data in their areas or contribute to whole-school evaluation well enough.

The school roll is increasing and there are many new staff, some of whom are relatively inexperienced. The school supports them very well and the quality of teaching has improved. The school has been successful in raising the standard of behaviour and also attendance. However, there are still too many absences due to holidays taken in term time. The many improvements since the previous inspection and accurate self-evaluation mean that the capacity to sustain improvement is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' rate of progress by:
 - consistent use of the assessment information available to ensure that pupils are effectively challenged in their work
 - involving subject leaders more in the evaluation of data.
- Further raise attendance to be above average by:
 - continuing to implement strategies to reduce the amount of absence caused by holidays taken in term time
 - working with parents and carers to persuade them, especially those with children new to the school, of the importance of regular attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Achievement is good and pupils enjoy their time in school. When asked to describe their school, one pupil said, 'It's a joyful school – lots of people smile.' In the large majority of lessons pupils concentrate, listen well and join in discussions fully. They respond well to interesting and challenging activities and demonstrate the ability to work effectively both independently and collaboratively. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on persuasive writing pupils discussed very maturely how best to promote the benefits of walking to school. This exemplified their particularly good understanding of a healthy lifestyle, which has resulted in the awards of Healthy Schools and Activemark. Similarly, in a Year 3 science lesson pupils were seen eagerly debating the best materials to use to make items such as cycle helmets and drinking cups. Pupils make good progress overall to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.

Throughout the school, progress is good and never less than satisfactory. This is true for all pupils, regardless of their ability or background. Most pupils' behaviour is good and contributes well to their learning. They have a good understanding of safety and say that there is always someone to talk to if they are unhappy. Pupils have a strong voice through the school council and many value their roles as eco-councillors, taking care of their environment. They have a well-developed understanding of what is right and wrong and the very strong spiritual ethos of the school is an important everyday aspect of their lives. Pupils have particularly well-developed information and communication technology (ICT) skills and are involved in many enterprise activities, such as baking and selling cakes to raise money to help towards the upkeep of the cathedral. These skills, along with their above average attainment in English and mathematics, help prepare them for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are knowledgeable and create a calm and well-ordered environment. They ask perceptive questions which make pupils think and express themselves well in their answers. ICT is used well to support learning, and literacy is promoted well. Teaching assistants provide good proactive support that enables pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language to have full access to lessons and activities. Most teachers are good at sharing with pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. In a few lessons this is not so apparent and so learning slows as pupils are not able to judge clearly what it is they should be learning. Good assessment is evident in nearly all lessons and is helping pupils to improve their work. Teachers' marking is usually clear and helpful in making clear the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. However, data are not used consistently well when planning work. This means that progress is not always as fast as it might be.

Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum that is enhanced well through local partnerships. For example, links with local schools broaden pupils' experiences by extending their sporting skills and opportunities in science and mathematics. Pupils said how much they enjoyed the opportunity to learn French. The curriculum is successful in assisting pupils to build their basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT. There is a good focus on using visits to widen pupils' team-building experiences on a residential visit. Care, guidance and support are strong features of the school's provision. The school has a caring ethos in which all pupils, especially those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, receive good support. Links between support staff, the special

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needs coordinator and teachers are effective in ensuring that these pupils play a full part in all aspects of the life of the school

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The dedicated headteacher has built a committed team of teachers and support staff who clearly enjoy working at the school and have the drive and ambition to move forward. When leaders, governors and staff were each asked what they felt was a key strength of the school, they were unanimous in talking about the very strong caring ethos. This was apparent throughout the inspection. The vast majority of parents and carers were most positive about all aspects of the school and talked about the staff being very approachable. The school engages well with parents and carers, including those who are new to the school and those at the early stages of learning English. At present, however, the school does not always impress upon all parents and carers the importance of regular attendance. The number of staff has increased and all feel very well supported. Self-evaluation is accurate. However, many subject leaders are new in post and their involvement in the school's self-evaluation is in its infancy. Governors are knowledgeable and very supportive of the school. They challenge the school and are becoming more proactive, but do not fully evaluate their own role at present. Safeguarding is good and the equally good progress of all groups of pupils means that equality of opportunity is good. The school has carried out a good evaluation of the socio-economic, religious and cultural aspects of community cohesion. While the promotion of community cohesion within school, locally and internationally, is particularly good, links with other schools nationally have not yet been fully established. The school provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make a very positive start in school because of good teaching in a caring and supportive environment. Parents and carers talk of the 'great understanding, compassion and empathy' of the staff. The good teaching ensures that from below average starting points overall, particularly in speaking, listening and writing, children make good progress. They leave Reception with skills that are broadly expected for their age in all areas. Some children who speak English as an additional language make excellent progress due to the good care and additional support they are given. Children enjoy coming to school and are relaxed, happy and eager to learn. They develop confidence, independence and respect for others because staff are skilled at providing a good balance of adult-led activities and giving children the freedom to make their own choices. Adults interact well with children to extend their learning. They are particularly skilled at questioning the children and enabling them to develop their communication skills. Literacy is reinforced well in many activities. During the inspection children were seen, for example, developing a good understanding of the names of different shapes. Staff know children's needs well as a consequence of parents and carers being encouraged to come into school and to share information about their children. Regular assessments track individual's progress well and help towards future planning by building on children's previous learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership and management and has a clear vision for how she views future improvements. At present there are not enough opportunities for outdoor learning. This is not helped by the physical restraints of the building and the outdated nature of some of the resources.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Well over half of parents and carers returned the Ofsted questionnaire. The vast majority were positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, they felt that the school keeps their children safe and that their children enjoy school. A very small minority of parents and carers thought that the school did not take account of their suggestions and concerns or that their children's needs were not met. The inspectors do not agree with those views and feel that the school does particularly well in these areas.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 161 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	60	35	36	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	67	70	26	27	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	53	42	44	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	57	59	32	33	5	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	56	58	34	35	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	54	40	42	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	41	48	50	7	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	45	48	50	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	51	37	39	6	6	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	54	36	38	5	5	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	49	36	38	5	5	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	64	67	28	29	0	0	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	68	23	24	3	3	3	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Cathedral Catholic Primary School, Lancaster, LA1 3BT

Thank you for welcoming us into your school when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the interesting things that you do. You say that your school is a good one that looks after you well and we agree with you.

Here are some of the things that we particularly liked.

- You like coming to school and you are keen to learn.
- Most of you behave well and you look after each other.
- Your teachers make your lessons fun and interesting.
- The adults in school make sure that you are very safe and well cared for.
- Your headteacher is a very good leader.

We have asked your headteacher to do these things.

- Make the improvements in your progress happen faster by making sure you always get challenging work.
- Ask the teachers responsible for the different subject areas to check how well all pupils do across the school.
- Improve the attendance of some of you.

You have your part to play too. Please let your teachers know if you are unsure of what you are supposed to be learning. Try your best to attend school regularly.

We would like to wish you all the best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector

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