

The Divine Mercy Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135648
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	360738
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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 of pupils on the school roll	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Glyn Young
Headteacher	Mrs Ann Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons were observed in Key Stages 1 and 2 taught by 11 teachers. Four separate observations were also carried out in the Early Years Foundation Stage taught by a variety of staff. The inspectors held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at monitoring of pupils' progress, the school's self-evaluation and planning for improvement and documentation relating to safeguarding. Questionnaires from 61 parents and carers were scrutinised, together with those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well different groups of pupils make progress and achieve in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- How effectively teaching engages pupils in their learning and impacts on the progress pupils make and their attainment.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels evaluate how well the school is doing and use the outcomes to raise attainment

Information about the school

This is a much larger-than-average school which opened in September 2009 following the amalgamation of two local Roman Catholic primary schools. It is housed in new, purpose-built buildings in an inner city area close to the centre of Manchester. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is well above average; they come from a wide variety of backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. Significant and increasing numbers of pupils join and leave the school at different times of the school year. Many of those who join the school speak very little or no English on arrival. The proportion of pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage who speak little or no English is very high. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. In September 2009 most staff transferred to the new school from the two amalgamated primary schools. However, five newly qualified teachers also joined the school at that time. The headteacher appointed to the new school in 2009 retired after being in post for one year. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher took up post in September 2010; both were internal appointments from the existing staff. From September 2009 to December 2010 an interim governing body oversaw the amalgamation of the two schools. A new governing body has been in place since January 2010.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It offers satisfactory value for money. The challenges of amalgamation, such as getting staff from two separate schools to work as a team and integrating pupils into the new school, have been successfully met. The new leaders and managers are now turning their attention successfully to raising attainment and improving the quality of teaching. Assessment data presented by the school, and confirmed by inspection evidence, show that pupils' achievement and attainment are rising securely and significantly across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, the school is demonstrating satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils feel very safe in school. This reflects the school's good provision for care, guidance and support. This is an inclusive school in which pupils from many ethnic backgrounds work and play harmoniously. The school's provision for supporting pupils who speak little or no English is very successful in helping them make rapid progress in language acquisition and integrating them into the life of the school. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly average in the 2010 national test results. In English, attainment was well below average because pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills. However, the curriculum is now presenting an increasing variety of meaningful contexts for pupils to develop their skills more effectively, with the result that literacy skills are improving rapidly. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, the proportion that is good is growing because leaders and managers are concentrating effectively on improving its quality and impact on pupils' learning. Where teaching is satisfactory, it is characterised by : too little challenge, especially for higher attaining pupils; a lack of clear learning objectives in lessons; a lack of insistence on pupils presenting their work neatly and with pride; and marking and target setting that does not give pupils a clear enough indication of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

Leaders, including the governing body, generally evaluate the work of the school accurately. Leadership knows what needs to be done to raise attainment. Forward planning provides the school with a clear set of priorities and actions for improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is regular. Leaders and managers are conducting it with increasing rigour and using the outcomes more effectively with the result that the proportion of good teaching is increasing..

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Tackle relative shortcomings in teaching and improve its quality overall to at least good in order to raise pupils' attainment across the school by:
 - – making sure that the level of challenge in lessons matches closely the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils, especially higher attaining pupils
 - – making sure that lesson objectives are clear
 - – providing pupils with more opportunities to practise and develop their extended writing skills
 - – continuing to monitor quality of teaching and learning with increasing rigour
 - – making sure that the presentation of pupils' written work in some classes, especially the quality of handwriting, is improved significantly.
- Use assessment more rigorously so that:
 - – targets are more meaningful to pupils in helping them understand what is expected of them and what they need to do to improve
 - – marking is of consistently high quality in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In lessons where teaching is good, pupils behave well and are eager to learn. Sometimes, when teaching is less than good and the level of challenge does not match their needs or abilities, pupils are lethargic and generally engage in too much idle chatter. Pupils work effectively in groups and pairs where they are keen to contribute and listen attentively to others' ideas and contributions. For example, pupils worked extremely effectively in pairs on problem solving in a Year 4 information and communication technology (ICT) lesson. Overall, pupils make satisfactory and improving progress from their generally well-below-average starting points. In an increasing number of classes where teaching is good and challenging they make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Pupils with English as an additional language or those who join the school with little or no English, generally make good progress in learning English because of the extensive and effective support they receive.

Pupils enjoy school. They are polite and respectful to each other, the adults working with them and to visitors. Attendance is improving. Effective measures to tackle persistent absences are starting to bite; there has been a significant decrease in incidents of persistent absence as a result. Pupils understand the importance of healthy lifestyles. They can say which foods are good for them and which foods are best enjoyed in moderation and why. Participation rates in the wide range of sporting extra-curricular activities are high. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school. The active school council seeks and represents pupils' views regularly. Pupils are active in the local community by, for example, supporting a range of local charities and initiatives. Pupils' good skills in ICT, their satisfactory attendance, good social skills and their growing levels of self-confidence and self-esteem mean that their preparation for their future well-being is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is underpinned by the

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strong Christian values that are part and parcel of the school's daily life. Assemblies and form prayers provide many opportunities for spiritual reflection. Pupils are tolerant and understanding of cultural and religious differences; they mix together seamlessly and respectfully.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress is inconsistent. However, it is improving overall because leaders and managers are making expectations much clearer and because monitoring is increasingly rigorous. The best teaching is lively, engaging, well-planned and clear about what it expects pupils to achieve. It matches tasks closely to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. Classroom procedures are tight. Expectations are high and neat and tidy presentation of written work is the norm. However, where teaching is satisfactory, it is not varied enough to keep all groups engaged in learning all the time, especially higher attaining pupils who become frustrated when the level of challenge is not high enough. Teachers mark pupils' written work regularly but too often accept untidy work.

The curriculum is improving as it becomes more creative and inventive. A move to a topic-based curriculum is proving popular with pupils who speak enthusiastically and knowledgeably about the topics they are studying. It is providing pupils with many more opportunities to practise their extended writing skills and is supporting the improvement in

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attainment and progress, as a result. There is a good range of enrichment activities in sports and the arts. Pupils say how much they enjoy these activities because 'they are the kind of thing we enjoy most'.

Support for pupils who are vulnerable, including support for their parents and carers, is effective in helping pupils feel secure, safe and valued. The care and support for pupils who join the school with little or no English is well planned and highly effective in meeting their needs. Pupils say that adults working with them in school are very caring and approachable. Transition arrangements for children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure that they settle seamlessly into school life. Effective links with secondary schools ensure that Year 6 pupils are also well placed to settle quickly into their new schools. Effective programmes to support pupils' personal development are successful in boosting pupils' self-esteem and confidence

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

New leaders and managers are clear about what the school does well and where it could and should be doing better. A new programme of staff development and increasingly effective monitoring are bringing about rapid improvement to the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management is holding teachers to account more rigorously for improving pupils' progress and attainment. The governing body is very supportive of the school; it is on a steep learning curve to understand fully how effective the school is so that it can provide the necessary challenge and help drive up attainment. Middle leaders and managers are growing into their new roles and responsibilities. They understand and share the school's vision for improvement. The school has forged good links with parents and carers. Parents are kept regularly informed about pupils' progress. Classes for parents in, for example, ICT and parenting skills are very popular. Leaders and managers have established strong and effective links with outside agencies to support and develop pupils' personal development and welfare.

In this inclusive school, the welfare of each pupil is paramount. As a result, individual needs are quickly established. This is especially effective in providing well for the most vulnerable pupils and those who join the school mid-term, often with little or no English. The school promotes respect for others very effectively. For example, pupils are very welcoming to the increasing numbers of pupils joining the school from abroad. The school evaluates the impact of its actions rigorously in this respect and there is no evidence of discrimination.

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Attention to safeguarding is satisfactory. Necessary checks on adults are carried out. Risk assessments are in place although some attention to detail is missing. Training in child protection is regular and of good quality. Necessary policies relating to safeguarding are in place but evidence of their perusal and adoption by the governing body is scant. Policies, procedures and actions to support vulnerable pupils and those who may be at risk are comprehensive and effective.

The school's good promotion of community cohesion results in it being a harmonious community where pupils of all backgrounds and religions work and play together respectfully. Visits to other, less culturally diverse schools, broaden pupils' experience and understanding of multicultural issues. Events are organised to promote racial tolerance and understanding, such as a recent Indian evening that was well attended by a large number of families of different ethnic heritages. The school has established links with a school in China; this is also broadening pupils' horizons. The school evaluates in detail the impact of its actions to promote community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The large Early Years Foundation Stage comprises Nursery and Reception classes housed in one large, open-plan space. Children quickly settle into routines because transition arrangements are very effective. They are well-cared for, happy, and feel safe. Procedures to assess and track children's progress are becoming increasingly sophisticated and effective. They show that children make satisfactory progress overall. Children make best progress in developing communication, language and literacy skills because these are a sharp focus for teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching provides a satisfactory range of teaching and learning activities. The indoor accommodation is vibrant and welcoming. Outside, facilities are less stimulating and provide limited opportunities for

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children to develop physically and to explore the world around them. Dedicated and effective teaching for children who speak little or no English ensures that they make rapid progress in language acquisition. Good relationships with parents and carers have been forged. Communication with parents and carers is regular and effective in letting them know the progress their children are making. Many parents join in the 'stay and play' sessions in the morning. The Nursery Rhyme Club attracts large numbers of parents and carers from the school's multicultural community. Leadership concentrates effectively on providing an innovative vision for the success of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teamwork is strong in pursuit of fulfilling it. Strong links have been forged with other local Early Years Foundation Stages to gather and implement good practice.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 15 percent of parents and carers returned the questionnaire; a below average response. A very large majority of responses were positive about all aspects of the school's work. A very few parents and carers expressed concern about the school promoting a healthy life style and the quality of leadership and management. These two aspects were looked at on inspection and the findings are included in this report.

The school is happy to consider any suggestions put forward by parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Divine Mercy Roman Catholic Primary School 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 61 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 409 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	79	13	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	66	20	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	59	24	39	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	59	25	41	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	57	26	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	51	28	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	46	26	43	4	7	0	0
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)	25	41	33	54	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	52	28	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	46	30	49	0	0	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	49	25	41	4	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	28	46	28	46	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	61	24	39	0	0	0	0

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 all 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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



24 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Divine Mercy Roman Catholic Primary School, Manchester, M14 7SH

Thank you for your welcome during the recent inspection of your school.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education. It was pleasing to see how smoothly your new school has settled down and how well you all get along with each other. Your school provides you with good care, guidance and support so that you feel safe in school. It was good to see how tolerant and understanding you are of pupils from different backgrounds and those who join your school speaking very little English.

In order to help you make faster progress in your learning, I am asking the school to do the following things.

Tackle relative shortcomings in teaching and improve its quality overall to at least good in order to raise your attainment by:

- making sure that the level of challenge in lessons matches closely the needs and abilities of all of you, especially those who are the fastest learners
- making sure that you know exactly what you are to do in each lesson
- providing you with more opportunities to practise and develop your writing skills
- monitoring the quality of teaching and learning more rigorously and using the outcomes more effectively to bring about rapid improvement
- making sure that the presentation of your written work is improved.

Use assessment more rigorously so that:

- targets are more meaningful and help you understand what is expected of you and what you need to do to improve
- marking is of consistently high quality in showing you how to improve.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure that your progress and achievement improve in the coming years.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Wall

Lead inspector

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