

St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105826
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	355849
Inspection dates	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

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	266
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Skilling
Headteacher	Mr Jeremy Morgan
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 16 lessons, where nine different teachers were seen. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, the School Improvement Partner, staff, groups of parents and carers and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, data on pupils' performance, development plans, safeguarding documents and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. The responses to 82 parents' and carers' questionnaires were considered, alongside responses from staff and pupils.

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

- The impact of actions taken to improve standards in writing throughout the school.
- How well teachers use information about pupils' abilities to plan their lessons to best meet the needs of all.
- How well subject leaders' roles have been developed to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding about how well they are progressing and what they need to do to improve further.

Information about the school

This is a broadly average-sized primary school. Nearly three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with a minority at an early stage in learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A larger than average number of pupils join or leave the school at times other than the usual ones. The school has Healthy Schools status, the Active mark, the Investors in People Award and the Rights Respecting Schools Award.

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

This is a good school that gives good value for money. It has the overwhelming support of its parents and carers because they feel informed and included. The governing body makes an effective contribution by supporting and challenging the school. Along with the senior team, it ensures a clear vision that all staff subscribe to and morale is high. Pupils make good progress so that attainment is broadly average by the time they leave Year 6. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also achieve well. Pupils are taught well how to take responsibility and they relish the opportunities to do so. In this very inclusive school, pupils make a willing contribution to their own and the wider communities. The outstandingly successful provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in pupils' good behaviour and harmonious relationships between pupils and with their teachers. Pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are catered for particularly well in this caring school and all groups of pupils participate fully in school life. The good care, guidance and support pupils receive ensure that they feel safe and have a good understanding of how to live safely. Pupils take a very positive approach to living healthily and have an excellent understanding of the importance of exercise. Pupils benefit from teaching that is mainly good and some that is excellent.

There are examples of excellent practice in teachers' lesson planning so that different groups of pupils are challenged appropriately. However, not all teachers use the information they have about pupils' attainment to plan precisely enough for different groups of pupils. Teachers' marking is undertaken conscientiously and encourages pupils, but some does not relate closely enough to pupils' targets or the next steps they need to take to improve further.

The school knows well its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and senior team are effective and give a strong lead in all matters concerning further improvement. They monitor closely the impact of actions taken to improve attainment and progress and rightly identify that there are still weaknesses in pupils' writing throughout the school, and speaking and listening skills are not as well developed as they should be. Self-evaluation procedures are well established. The school has good capacity to raise standards further and to sustain improvements. For example, past weaknesses in teaching have been successfully tackled. Pupils' attendance has improved significantly and is now broadly average and there is an upward trend in standards.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school by:
 - extending opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in subjects across the curriculum

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- ensuring that teachers plan more formally to improve speaking and listening skills and use these skills as a foundation to promote writing.
- Ensure that all teaching is at least good by:
 - adopting a more consistent approach to planning lessons that builds on the examples of excellent practice in the school
 - making more effective use of the information teachers have about pupils' attainment levels to stretch and challenge all pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable
 - marking work more precisely to inform pupils about their progress towards their targets and the next steps they need to take.

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

Learning is good in classrooms because teachers prepare interesting work that pupils find stimulating. As well as enjoying their work, pupils achieve well and, apart from their weakness in writing, they are equipped and ready for the next stage of their education, particularly in terms of their positive attitudes to school and learning. Pupils listen attentively and behaviour in the classroom is always good and sometimes excellent. Pupils have good relationships with each other and their teachers. They work well together, participating joyfully in the many opportunities given to share their learning in pairs and groups, whether solving problems or comparing their answers.

Many children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge that are well below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and build on this to achieve well through the rest of the school. Pupils leave Year 6 with attainment that is broadly average in English and mathematics. However, attainment is weakest in writing. The higher than normal proportion of pupils who join the school at different times than usual are quick to make up ground and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, other vulnerable pupils and those learning English as an additional language enjoy their work, make good progress and achieve well because of the good quality support they receive in lessons from teachers and teaching assistants.

Pupils have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. They are open and welcoming to visitors and they greatly enjoy and appreciate the cultural diversity of the school and the community in which they live. The school council takes an active role in shaping the daily routines of the school. A very large proportion of pupils take part in the sporting activities offered by the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	1
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	1

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 is mostly good. Some is outstanding, but a little remains no better than satisfactory. Class management is consistently good, ensuring good behaviour and a positive learning atmosphere in all lessons. Where teaching is most effective, teachers plan clearly what they expect different ability groups of pupils to learn, and what progress they should make. Here, assessment data are used carefully to match the content of the lesson to pupils' abilities. This is not consistently the case and work is occasionally too hard or too easy for particular groups. Some pupils do not fully understand their progress in relation to their targets or the next steps they need to take to improve further. This is because teachers' marking does not address these areas consistently enough. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to engage pupils and to help them understand new ideas. The needs of pupils who have extra educational, language or social needs are met well by teachers' and teaching assistants' very caring relationships with pupils and the carefully targeted support given.

The curriculum is broad and interesting and meets pupils' personal needs as well as raising their academic achievement. However, there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum and insufficient focus on developing their speaking and listening skills. The effective partnerships developed with other schools and agencies enhance the curriculum well. They help to provide a good range of additional activities in the arts and excellent

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provision in sport. They also make a positive contribution to pupils' personal development as do the many visitors and educational visits and the annual residential experience for older pupils.

The school's good quality care, guidance and support and the effective links between the school and outside agencies ensure pupils' well-being and general good development. The school takes a rigorous approach to encouraging good attendance, which has improved significantly. Pupils learning English as an additional language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils feel secure and are supported well, enabling them to make good progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher gives an excellent lead in setting a clear vision for the continued improvement of the school. The senior team and the governing body are also effective in setting the pace and direction for the school's development. The governing body is active in ensuring that good practice is observed regarding the safeguarding of its pupils. All aspects of the school's work underpin the commitment to pupils' safety and well-being. For example, the child protection provision connects clearly to the school's curriculum policy. The governing body sees to it that financial control, planning and accountability are good and resources are used well. It also meets well its responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for pupils in all aspects of their school life, so all groups achieve equally well. The school tackles any form of discrimination assiduously. Staff throughout the school share in the ambition to succeed. They contribute well to ensure overall good quality teaching and learning and a drive to improve further. However, middle managers are mainly new to post and are not yet playing a full part in monitoring and evaluation systems. The provision for community cohesion is good, based squarely on the school's aim of ensuring an inclusive community. It has a clear impact seen in the way pupils from different backgrounds get on well together and understand their place in the wider society. The school knows well its strengths and where it needs to improve further. Good quality planning at all levels supports further improvement. Productive partnerships with other schools ensure a flow of additional expertise into the school and a sharing of the school's acknowledged expertise with other local schools. Targets are challenging and encourage pupils to aspire to higher achievement. They are mainly met. Self-evaluation is based appropriately on measuring the impact that actions taken have on pupils' attainment and progress. The result is a successful school where pupils achieve well.

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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
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 settle very quickly into the nursery because parents and carers are encouraged to be full partners in their children's education. There are good induction procedures and routines in place that engender a calm, purposeful learning atmosphere. This is reinforced by the good quality care and welfare provided. Many of the children start Nursery with skill levels that are low in relation to those expected at this age and are often in the early stages of learning to speak English. Effective teaching makes a marked impact on children's language development, although the opportunity is missed to reinforce this further through the use of signs and symbols in display areas. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and staff are particularly successful in developing children's personal and social development. Children enjoy baking their own 'snowman' biscuits, then sharing them. One child took responsibility for giving out milk and all benefited from learning to be independent, practising new vocabulary and acquiring social skills. By the time they enter Year 1, most children are still below, but much closer to, the skill levels expected, reflecting good achievement. The coordinator provides good leadership and management, ensuring a well-structured curriculum that builds children's learning systematically. Effective assessment procedures are in place. Teachers' planning ensures exciting learning experiences, because the teachers know well how young children learn. Thus, activities are purposeful with specific outcomes planned. Children respond well to the good opportunities they are given to choose their own activities, both in the classrooms and outside. Both environments are planned well to provide exciting stimuli for children across all areas of learning.

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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

Views of parents and carers

Around a third of parents and carers returned the questionnaire which represents an average sized response. The overwhelming majority are supportive of the school, as are those who met the inspectors. Parents and carers approve the approaches taken to ensure good communications. They also appreciate the bilingual support available to the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. They praise the school for the ways in which children enjoy school and learn how to behave and respect other people. The comment, 'My child looks forward to coming to school. All the staff are very kind and very helpful; she enjoys school', typifies the sentiments of the positive comments made. The inspection team found that the school works hard and successfully to include parents and carers in all its activities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 266 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	65	25	30	0	0	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	53	65	26	32	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	63	29	35	0	0	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	55	32	39	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	56	33	40	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	46	37	45	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	50	32	39	1	1	2	2
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)	39	48	31	38	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	45	38	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	55	30	37	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	48	31	38	0	0	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	44	54	26	32	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	59	29	35	2	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. 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 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.



2 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St John's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale, Rochdale, OL11 1EZ

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us. We enjoyed watching and listening to you in your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. We found that yours is a good school. We like the way you take responsibility, and how helpful older pupils are towards younger children. We particularly enjoyed the way you participate so enthusiastically in your sporting activities and your enthusiastic singing in assembly. You obviously enjoy coming to school and this shows in your good behaviour in classrooms and around the school. We appreciate how your school helps you in learning to live healthily and safely and to develop into mature young people.

The teaching you receive is good. This means you achieve well and the standards you reach by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. You say that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you. You were very positive in your questionnaire responses, although some of you indicate that you are not sure about how well you are doing. To make things even better, we have asked your teachers to help you by being clearer about the progress you are making and how you can improve. We have also asked your teachers to change some of the ways they plan lessons so that all of you achieve the best you can and, in particular, so that you improve your writing skills. You can help by continuing to work hard.

We hope you continue to enjoy school and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Jones

Lead inspector

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