

# St Brigid's RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105523
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	377256
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	212
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Derek McCartney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Julie Miles
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	07 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Grey Mare Lane Beswick Manchester M11 3DR
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed nine teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, managers, staff and groups of pupils. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies and school development plans. In total 43 parental questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 88 questionnaires completed by the pupils and 14 by school staff.

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

- Whether the recent improvements to progress and attainment are sustained and sustainable.
- Whether lessons at Key Stage 1 are promoting the best possible progress for all groups of pupils.
- Whether the more able in Key Stage 2 are sufficiently challenged, especially in mathematics.
- How well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are learning and if they are effectively prepared for their work in Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

This school is similar in size to the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average and there is a higher than average proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school caters for pupils from a rich variety of backgrounds, including those of White British, Irish, European, Asian, African and Caribbean heritage, as well as Traveller children. Around 20% of pupils speak English as an additional language.

In recognition of the good work done, the school holds the Activemark and Artsmark awards and has Healthy School status.

There have been significant changes in leadership and staffing since the last inspection. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have been in post for one year with other senior managers recently appointed. The school offers a daily breakfast club for pupils on the premises.

**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**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school that is continuing to improve under the good leadership and management of senior leaders. It has strengths in pastoral areas so that good care, guidance and support enable pupils to develop well personally. Provision and learning in the good Early Years Foundation Stage has been improved. Under the dynamic and visionary leadership of the new headteacher, the school has stringently evaluated its own effectiveness and senior leaders have an accurate view of performance. An ambitious programme of development has resulted in good improvement, for example, in the assessment of pupils' progress, teaching, curriculum and the learning environment, although senior leaders recognise that there is still more to do in order to fulfil their vision for the school. The school's accurate records show a marked improvement in pupils' progress, with most underachievement from previous years now being eradicated. Senior leaders, members of the governing body and the staff share a clear vision for the future and are keen to build on the significant improvements already made. The capacity for sustained improvement is good.

From a below average, and often low, starting point children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As they enter Year 1, their personal development is average but other skills are generally below average. While their learning needs are mostly met in Year 1, there are occasions when pupils move onto National Curriculum work before they are ready. In Years 1 to 4, progress is satisfactory overall but inconsistencies in teaching mean that learning varies between classes. In some lessons, the pace of learning is slow, pupils sit listening passively to the teacher for too long or work does not provide a good level of challenge for the different ability groups. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding teaching. In these years, progress accelerates to a rapid pace. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. School leaders recognise fully that the proportion of good teaching needs to rise further if the school is to meet its own ambitions and eliminate the remaining shortcomings in learning. Senior leaders have introduced important key initiatives in order to pursue this and monitor the progress of these closely. These initiatives have improved learning significantly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 but there is still an element of inconsistency in some of the other years. Sharing of good practice is making an impact on the quality of teaching but there is scope to extend this profitable work further.

The curriculum is satisfactory; it is well enhanced by visits to places of interest and additional activities at lunchtime and after school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and supported very effectively through good links with the church and the very strong Catholic ethos that permeates school life.

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.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality and consistency in teaching and learning by:
  - ensuring that teaching and the curriculum in Year 1 supports pupils consistently in the learning journey between the Early Years Foundation Stage work and the National Curriculum programmes of study
  - ensuring that work is consistently planned at different levels of difficulty to challenge pupils fully
  - ensuring that all lessons have good pace and that pupils are actively engaged in learning rather than listening to the teacher for too long
  - ensuring new initiatives are embedded consistently across the school
  - increasing opportunities for staff to share good practice in order to bring the overall quality of teaching up to the standard seen in the best lessons.

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

<b>3</b>
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Boys and girls make equal progress and say they thoroughly enjoy learning. In one lesson, some Year 6 pupils explored the derivations of words, finding letter patterns to support their spelling. All age groups are keen to learn and work hard. Year 5 pupils, for example, recall their times tables at speed and relish the challenge of working with large numbers. Achievement is satisfactory for all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and the Traveller children.

Progress in Years 1 and 2 is currently satisfactory and improving. However, some Year 1 pupils are not yet ready for National Curriculum work and their progress slows when there is an insufficient practical element to learning to meet their needs. By the end of Year 2, attainment is close to average and the school is working on some remaining aspects of writing in order to improve levels of attainment. Good work on letters and sounds is helping them to read and spell confidently. Across Key Stage 2, progress varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Pupils are increasingly meeting the targets that leaders set and, especially in Years 5 and 6, making up for shortfalls in their previous learning. Progress in mathematics for the more able has improved, but the pace of learning for the lower juniors is variable and sometimes too slow to meet the targets set.

Pupils are polite, considerate of each other and clearly know the difference between right and wrong. They demonstrate a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy plenty of exercise. They assert that they feel safe and have a good awareness of

potential dangers, for example, when using the internet. They make an active contribution to school life, for example, by acting as buddies or playleaders. Pupils have good involvement with the parish and church. However, their understanding of life in different areas and countries is more limited. Attendance is much improved and is above average. Pupils are soundly prepared for their future education and work because they make satisfactory progress and have good attitudes. The school council ensures that pupils' views are represented in the decision making process.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

## How effective is the provision?

There have been many improvements in teaching over the last year. These have resulted in more accurate assessment of pupils' progress, better use of assessment information in planning work, and higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Some practice, however, is not embedded across all years. In Years 1 to 4, the different ability groups do not always have the challenge to stretch them and introductions to lessons are sometimes prolonged, reducing the time available for independent, active learning. When teaching assistants are allocated to a specific teaching task, their support is good, but when they work in a general support role, they are less effective. The good and often outstanding teaching for the upper juniors is typified by high expectations, fast pace, lots of short challenges and opportunities for collaborative work.

Links between subjects are developing and planning includes increasing opportunities for enquiry and personal study. For example, pupils used reference books, maps and the internet to discover facts about Italy, using their geographical and literacy skills to good effect. Much of this creative curriculum is new and staff are engaged currently in reviewing and evaluating its effectiveness and making changes where needed. Intervention strategies are successful in boosting progress and staff are strengthening the provision for gifted and talented pupils. Good enhancements, such as the after-school clubs, lunchtime sport sessions and school visits, help to broaden pupils' interests, develop talents and encourage healthy lifestyle choices.

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

The quality of care, guidance and support is good and a strength of the school. Systems to deal with any incidents of bullying are established and pupils are confident that adults act promptly to address any concerns or worries that they have. The overwhelming majority of pupils who replied to the questionnaire agreed that 'adults in my school care about me'. The behaviour policy is clear and there is good regard for classroom rules that are written and owned by pupils themselves. An interesting range of rewards encourage good effort, best behaviour or thoughtful deeds. Vulnerable pupils and their families are effectively supported both by school staff and through partnerships with outside agencies. As a result, barriers to learning are removed and pupils with emotional difficulties, or those who have been previously excluded, learn to cope with the conventions of school life and thrive. Many pupils take advantage of the breakfast club, which provides a good start to the day. Good transition arrangements help to ease the journey into secondary education but transition between the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 is not as smooth as it could be.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides good leadership. Aply assisted by the deputy headteacher, she provides strong direction for the school and her clear vision is instrumental in maintaining good care for pupils while driving whole-school improvements. Senior leaders have made good improvements in provision and there is an increasing sense of staff teamwork. However, even with all this good work and improvement, senior leaders are aware that they still need to ensure a greater consistency in the extent to which initiatives are fully embedded throughout the school. For example, the new personal targets make a good contribution to learning for the older pupils but some younger ones do not understand fully what they need to do to improve. The sharing of skills and peer tutoring, both grounded in good quality leadership and management of teaching and learning, have been effective in improving many aspects of teaching but school leaders acknowledge that this process still has further potential benefits.

The school is a harmonious community and pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds get on very well together. School and church events, together with good partnerships with local businesses and agencies, help pupils to develop a sense of local community. However, pupils' understanding of life in different areas and countries is more limited. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Pupils have equal access to activities and, for example, pupils who speak English as an additional language and the Traveller children have the support they need. Safeguarding measures meet requirements. There are tried and tested systems for child protection and good quality staff training. Parents and carers are well informed

about progress and the school is looking at ways of involving them further in their children's education. Members of the governing body bring a good level of expertise to support school leaders and have a secure overview of standards and achievement. With some new recruits in place, the governing body is developing its role in monitoring and evaluating key policies and performance.

*These are the grades for the leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start school, many children have a range of skills that is at least below that typical for the age group and for some their starting point is often low. Good induction procedures and home visits ensure that children settle quickly. Planning takes careful account of children's interests and their stage of learning in order to keep them well motivated and challenged. The needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are met well and planning takes good account of children's different cultures and backgrounds. Teaching is good and tasks, both indoors and out, include lots of opportunities for problem solving through play. For example, one group investigated new 'footprints' in the outdoor area for clues to the identity of the 'mystery visitor'. Skills of independence are promoted very successfully as children are constantly encouraged to follow their own lines of enquiry and explore their world. As a result, they are keen to learn and make good progress. As they enter Year 1, personal development is average and behaviour is good. While other skills have improved considerably they are still below national expectations.

The spacious accommodation and resources create an exciting learning environment, both indoors and out. Leadership and management are good. The new leader has a clear vision of excellence. She generates strong teamwork and provides good professional development for staff. As a result, routines, policies and procedures are consistently followed and welfare is maintained at a good level. Plans for future development include greater involvement of parents and carers in the learning process and a stronger emphasis on provision for gifted and talented children.



*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire have positive views and the vast majority agree that their child enjoys school and is safe. Quotes that reflect these views include 'every child matters', 'staff are very welcoming' and 'my child loves going to school and learning'. There are commendations for the good quality of care. Some parents and carers are pleased with new security measures around the school gates but there is some confusion about the correct entrance route. Inspectors reported the issue to senior managers who have agreed to send out a further explanation and clear directions.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Brigid's RC 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 216 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	67	13	30	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	29	67	13	30	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	29	67	12	28	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	58	14	33	1	2	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	27	63	14	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	49	19	44	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	47	22	51	1	2	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	58	16	37	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	49	19	44	2	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	49	16	37	3	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	51	15	35	3	7	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	26	60	12	28	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	65	10	23	3	7	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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 September 2011

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of St Brigid's RC Primary School, Manchester, M11 3DR**

Thank you for the very warm welcome and lovely smiles you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated the interesting conversations we had and all the help you gave us.

St Brigid's is a happy school and provides you with a sound education. Your behaviour is good and you all get on very well together. You are a credit to yourselves, your families and your school. Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with us. It is good to hear comments such as 'teachers have good ideas to make lessons interesting' and 'you're always surrounded by friends'.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Those of you in the Nursery and Reception Years enjoy your work and play, especially investigating and finding things out for yourselves. Some of you, however, do not have enough of this type of activity in Year 1. In Key Stages 1 and 2 your work is improving and you often make super progress in Years 5 and 6. In Years 1 to 4, however, progress is uneven and we think it could improve. To make the school even better we have asked your teachers to:

- provide more practical activities for some children in Year 1
- ensure that your lessons in Years 1 to 4 always have different levels of work depending on what you have already learned
- make sure that all lessons have good pace and that you don't have to sit listening to the teacher for too long
- find time for teachers to share their best ideas and for school leaders to check lessons and make sure that all of the above is working.

You can help by continuing to work hard, completing your homework and being ambitious. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play. Please accept our best wishes for the future and continue to enjoy your happy school.

**Yours sincerely,**

**Lynne Read  
Lead Inspector**

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