

St Dunstan's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105526
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	377257
Inspection dates	5–6 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Steven Hill

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	273
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	D Featherstone
Headteacher	Karen Thompson
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 20 lessons, taught by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, particularly that related to safeguarding, and data about pupils' attainment and progress. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. Questionnaires were scrutinised from staff, pupils and from 120 parents and carers.

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

- To what extent is teaching consistent in lessons, particularly in involving all pupils and providing tasks that are matched to their different needs?
- How well does the school track the progress of different groups and how effectively is the information used to make improvements?
- How reliable are assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and why do apparent outcomes vary so much?
- How well does the school provide support for pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties, and how effective is this?

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. It has an Early Years Foundation Stage unit that provides full-time education for children of both Nursery and Reception ages. About two-thirds of pupils are of White British origin, with the rest coming from a range of minority ethnic groups; pupils of Black African heritage comprise the largest of these groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than in most schools, and is increasing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, but a high proportion of these have considerable behavioural or emotional difficulties. There have been a number of staffing changes over the last two years, including a new headteacher and assistant headteacher.

A private provider organises a breakfast and after-school club on the premises. This is inspected and reported upon separately.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support is good and leads to corresponding strengths in pupils' personal development. The school is a thriving, harmonious multi-cultural community where pupils from different backgrounds get on noticeably well together. They value diversity and show respect for different people and their opinions. Behaviour is good. An increasingly sophisticated and thorough system, to support pupils who find conforming to expectations of behaviour difficult, is helping them to cope better, and ensures that the learning of their classmates is seldom disrupted. Pupils feel safe and greatly enjoy school, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Attendance has risen considerably in the last few years, from very low levels previously. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' progress increased considerably last year and is now satisfactory, after a period of several years when progress declined and standards fell. Strong leadership by the headteacher has helped staff to tackle this issue effectively, although there are still shortcomings in aspects of progress. Attainment is now rising, particularly in mathematics. Progress is weaker in English, particularly for boys, although this difference is reducing. The school has accurately identified that too few pupils read for pleasure, and that they do not have the good understanding of a range of texts that could support improvements in their writing. This has been identified as a key priority for the coming year.

Pupils still only make satisfactory progress across the school as a whole because, although many lessons are good, there are too many inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In good lessons, teachers match work closely to pupils' different needs, and provide them with tasks that engage their attention and drive forward their learning well. In satisfactory lessons, work is sometimes too hard or too easy for some pupils, or some spend their time on activities that do not contribute sufficiently to their learning. The school's curriculum emphasises making links between subjects, and giving pupils active tasks, and these are often features of good lessons. However, in other lessons, teachers do not put this successfully into practice, so pupils sometimes sit too long passively listening, for example, so their concentration wanes and progress slows.

The school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Its self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and weaknesses and consequent action has led to improvements

in key areas. A significant factor in this has been a sophisticated system to track pupils' progress. This is used well to identify where support is needed for individuals, and to provide it, as well as to identify and address school-wide issues. However, the large majority of this work has been done by the headteacher and, more recently, by the two assistant headteachers. The involvement of other teachers in leadership and monitoring is too limited, as are opportunities for them to share good practice with each other.

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 pupils' progress by increasing the consistency of teaching quality, particularly by:
 - ensuring that tasks are always matched to pupils' individual needs
 - making sure that pupils are always involved in meaningful activities that support their learning.

- Raise standards in English, especially for boys, by:
 - developing pupils' enthusiasm for reading and their knowledge of a wide range of texts
 - ensuring that all staff consistently implement the school's policy for teaching how the sounds of English relate to the letters in words.

- Develop the role of teachers who are not in the senior leadership team, to give them greater involvement in monitoring provision and outcomes, in sharing good practice, and taking a leadership role in the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

All groups of pupils achieve satisfactorily. From low levels of attainment when they start school, they now reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6, although standards have been too low in some recent years. Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different ethnic heritages make similar progress, regardless of ability or background. Boys' and girls' progress has been variable in different classes from year to year, with boys doing less well than girls overall. This gap has been eliminated in mathematics, and is narrowing in English. Pupils make good progress in many lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils responded positively to a good level of challenge when planning spending on food for a party, tackling multiplication problems with decimals that were carefully matched to their attainment. Pupils in Year 1 joined in enthusiastically and improved their skills in singing and playing musical instruments, in response to the teacher's lively presentation and clear instructions. Conversely, in another lesson in Year 1, although those pupils who worked directly with adults made good progress in understanding mathematics, those who worked independently on activities they chose themselves

made too little progress, as the activities were unrelated to the objectives of the lesson, and they had too little input from adults.

Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and they do well when work is tailored to meet their specific needs. In lessons where this is not the case, the pace of their learning is slower. Pupils who have behavioural or emotional difficulties make good progress socially, and hence are able to achieve satisfactorily. A variety of initiatives has been introduced recently, and is helping these pupils to enjoy lessons more and to cope with difficulties and to behave better. This was seen in a lesson when a skilled adult worked with two boys who find it very difficult to conform. They were completely absorbed in a separate task using computers, making good progress in response to the teacher's challenging questions, whilst their classmates also got on well in the main lesson.

The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Their relationships are good with each other and with staff. Boys and girls from different ethnic groups play and work together happily, and value their friendships and their diverse origins. One pupil explained that she had taught her best friend to count in her home language, saying, 'I'm so proud of her!' Pupils' spiritual development is a particular strength, and this was seen in 'family' assemblies when they reflected thoughtfully and respectfully about complex ideas. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community, undertaking responsibilities conscientiously. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy eating and a balanced diet, and join in exercise enthusiastically. Their average basic skills mean they are satisfactorily prepared for the future.

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	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
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	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹The 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?

Teaching and learning are improving but are still not consistent enough. Classes are usually managed well, and expectations are clear so that pupils behave well and work hard. Relationships are good, so pupils are confident in offering suggestions or asking for help. Some good use is made of interactive whiteboards to clarify teachers' explanations and to generate interest and enthusiasm. There are good systems to assess pupils' progress, and the best lessons make good use of this information to match work to individuals' needs, although this is not consistent. A strength of the best lessons is the way in which teachers monitor pupils' ongoing progress so that they can intervene to help if any are confused, as well as challenging pupils to improve their work. The marking of pupils' books is conscientious, but seldom shows pupils how to progress to the next level and reach their targets.

The curriculum has a suitable focus on literacy and numeracy and increasingly provides exciting, hands-on experiences for pupils, although this is not consistent. Activities are often matched well to pupils' specific needs and interests. There is a sound range of extra-curricular activities for pupils in Key Stage 2, although little is available for younger pupils. An interesting range of visits and visitors contributes to pupils' enthusiasm and learning. There has been an attempt to continue with elements of Early Years Foundation Stage provision in Year 1, to ease transition. However, the arrangements in Year 1 for pupils to choose things for themselves are not well organised, and there is too little intervention from adults in these activities to enhance pupils' progress. The school has a clear policy for teaching phonics, but not all teachers implement this consistently.

The quality of pastoral care is a key strength of the school. Pupils have great confidence that the adults care about them and say that any problems are quickly sorted out by the teachers. Adults consistently reinforce moral values and positive attitudes, and encourage pupils to behave responsibly. Pupils support each other well. The school makes extensive use of different agencies to provide good support for pupils and families, particularly those pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. This is a major strength of the help to pupils with significant emotional or behavioural problems. The parent support advisor makes a strong contribution to the school's successes in improving behaviour and attendance.

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?

The headteacher provides very strong leadership and gives the school a clear sense of direction, which is improving provision systematically. She is well-supported by the assistant headteachers, and together they have established an accurate oversight of

strengths and weaknesses, and clear priorities. Staff have worked together effectively to address these priorities and improve pupils' progress and attendance. The monitoring of lessons by the headteacher has provided effective feedback to teachers, enabling them to improve their practice. However, there are still too many inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Most members of staff are not sufficiently involved in monitoring or providing leadership to colleagues. The rigorous tracking of pupils' progress has ensured that all groups make similar progress, so the promotion of equal opportunities is good. All groups of pupils, regardless of background, are fully involved in school life. Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body are supportive but their involvement in self-evaluation is not sufficient for them to hold the school rigorously to account for its performance.

There are strong links with parents and carers, who are given good information about their children's progress and school life. They are consulted regularly about important issues. Links with partner organisations promote pupils' well-being effectively, and others contribute to the curriculum. For example, links with the local allotment holders is helping pupils to understand 'green' issues. Safeguarding is good and the school has improved this substantially in the last two years, taking good account of concerns expressed by parents and carers. Systems are rigorous and effective. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well in the school, and there is good involvement in the local community, particularly through strong links with the Parish. However, there is only very limited involvement in extending this to contrasting communities beyond Manchester, either in this country or abroad.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress overall, and achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. They enjoy school, follow routines well and their behaviour is good. They have good relationships with adults and each other and feel safe in school. Staff prepare an interesting range of activities that engage children's enthusiasm, both indoors and out. Much of the teaching in the unit is now good. Adults consistently assess children's progress and attainment, but in the past this has been erratic, and results of assessments at the end of the Reception Year have not been reliable. Leaders have rightly identified that this does not give a clear enough

view of how children are doing. Improvements have been made to the accuracy of assessments at the end of reception, but there is still not a clear baseline to establish children's attainment when they start in the setting. Safeguarding arrangements parallel the good provision in the main school, as do the positive links established with parents and carers. The new leader has accurately identified what needs to be done to improve provision further, and changes are making a positive impact on children's learning. For example, she is organising training to help teaching assistants make better use of assessment data, so they can plan the next steps in children's learning more effectively.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A relatively high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. They were very positive about the school and what it provides for their children. They are particularly pleased that their children are safe and happy in school, and they value the quality of leadership, management and teaching. A few responses expressed concern at the way the school deals with the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Inspectors observed that this was handled firmly but sensitively during the inspection, so that other pupils' learning was not disrupted. In discussion, pupils expressed great confidence that teachers dealt quickly with any problems. School records and case-studies show that the school has handled such incidents well in the past, following the required procedures closely, and making good use of outside partners to support their work. Other parents and carers had concerns about the progress that children make, and inspectors found that there are inconsistencies in this, although overall progress increased considerably during last year.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Dunstan'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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 273 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	60	46	38	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	56	50	42	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	33	68	57	7	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	33	71	59	6	5	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	38	64	53	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	42	59	49	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	40	61	51	3	3	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)	41	34	62	52	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	23	75	63	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	38	63	53	6	5	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	29	69	58	5	4	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	57	48	54	45	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	53	44	58	48	4	3	1	1

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).

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">■ 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.



7 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Dunstan's RC Primary School, Manchester, M40 9HF

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we inspected your school. We were pleased to see that your behaviour is good and we were very impressed by how well you all get along together. You told us that you enjoy school and that the teachers often make learning fun. I expect this is why your attendance has gone up, and is now above average. Your school provides a satisfactory education for you all.

In your work, most of you are getting close to the standards that are expected for your age, although you do better in mathematics than in English. You make satisfactory progress. The adults have already agreed that they are going to help you to get better at reading and writing this year, and to help you read more and to enjoy lots of different kinds of books.

In some lessons you make good progress, especially when the activities are exciting and the work is not too easy or too hard for some of you. We have asked the teachers to concentrate on making all your lessons like this, by making sure that everyone gets work that is just right for them.

The teachers and other adults take good care of you and try to make sure that if anyone needs any extra help then they get it. They are keen to make the school better, and the headteacher has helped everyone make improvements in the last two years. We have asked that, in future, all the teachers are more involved in checking on how things are going, so they can help each other more.

You can help too, by keeping up your good behaviour, and by trying particularly hard with your reading and writing. We hope that you carry on enjoying life at St Dunstan's.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Hill
Lead inspector

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