

Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131285
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	381327
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Alan Parkinson

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	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	E Aspin
Headteacher	Andrew Brown
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson
Melvyn Hemmings

Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed eight teachers and visited 15 lessons. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, pupil progress data, pupils' workbooks and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, four members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors analysed 116 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

This is a slightly larger than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average and increasing. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language are slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average. The mobility of the school's population is slightly below the national average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government. The school has received the ECO Green Flag 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because not enough teaching is outstanding and insufficient opportunities are created for pupils to make more than expected progress.
- Pupil’s achievement overall is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress across all areas of learning because of the good-quality teaching that they receive. This continues throughout Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, target levels set for pupils tend to be focused on them making expected progress, rather than encouraging them to aim higher.
- Teaching is good because teachers have high expectations, motivate pupils and have good subject knowledge. They engage pupils in a range of enjoyable activities that promote good learning. However, teachers do not always provide pupils with sufficiently challenging tasks to promote even faster progress. The leadership of teaching is not sufficiently rigorous to provide teachers with regular feedback that clearly focuses on how they can improve their practice further.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and parents and carers overwhelmingly support this view. This is a very inclusive school. Pupils are kind and very respectful to each other and to staff and visitors.
- The overall quality of the leadership and management of the school is good. The senior leaders are well supported by a very effective governing body. They have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and have identified appropriate areas for improvement. However, the school improvement plan does not clearly show the precise actions to be taken to make more teaching outstanding and accelerate progress. The curriculum is well-planned, interests pupils and promotes pupils’ positive attitudes to learning and supports their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding and thus raise attainment further by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of the quality of teaching is more rigorously focused on improving its quality
 - making sure that the level of challenge is always high enough, especially for higher-attaining pupils
 - setting more aspirational targets for pupils and involving them more in their own learning.
- Add more rigour to procedures for monitoring and self-evaluation to provide a sharper focus on identifying specific actions to improve further the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge generally below those expected of their age. By the end of Reception children make good progress to attain levels that are broadly in line with those typically expected for their age across all areas of learning. Children's needs are met well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is appropriately challenging for different groups of children. Improvements to the quality of the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) have raised attainment in reading and writing significantly. Numeracy skills and the use of the outdoor area are less well-developed and these have been appropriately identified by the school as areas for further development.

Strategies implemented to improve attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 have had a positive impact and pupils make good progress. This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2. School data, supported fully by inspection evidence, show that pupils make good progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 from their starting points. Parents and carers are accurate in their positive views that their children make good progress.

In Year 2, pupils demonstrate good reading skills and by the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is slightly above the national average. Pupils read fluently and with expression and are able to apply their skills in phonics effectively to read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is slightly above average for all groups of pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in developing their reading and writing skills and gaps with other pupils are narrowing.

From Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 reading skills are well-developed and pupils make good progress in literacy and mathematics. However, targets for higher-attaining pupils are not always sufficiently challenging and this sometimes acts as a brake on accelerating their progress at a faster rate.

Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the learning of pupils, including those who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those identified by the school as needing additional support. Consequently, all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points.

Quality of teaching

Pupils say that teachers make learning enjoyable. In the best lessons a wide range of appropriate activities ensures that pupils are fully engaged and that there is a good pace to learning. Teachers use their good subject knowledge well to promote good learning. For example, in a Key Stage 1 phonics lesson, well-planned practical activities captured and maintained pupils' interest and their positive attitudes to learning, enabling them to make good progress. Good teaching and learning is evident in most lessons and promotes good application of basic skills and development of problem-solving skills. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, pupils collaborated well when working in small groups to solve problems relating to real-life situations, such as calculating the cost of shopping from a list. Almost all parents say that their children are taught well. The pupils enjoy the challenges set by their teachers to think deeply and discuss their ideas with talking partners. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were discussing and challenging others in their groups on the causes that led to the sinking of the Titanic.

Good-quality marking, especially of writing, provides pupils with appropriate feedback that encourages them and sets personal targets for them to improve. Pupils know their targets, but not all are clear about their current level of performance. In some lessons, pupils are not provided with opportunities to be more involved in their own learning and lessons are too teacher-led. Some pupils say they find some of the work easy, especially more-able pupils, and that they could do even better by being challenged further to enable them to make even better progress.

The vast majority of questionnaires returned show that parents and carers are rightly pleased with how effectively the school helps their child to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and how effectively the school helps them support their child's learning. Throughout the school the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident through good, collaborative learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel very safe in school. 'Everybody looks after each other' and 'Staff look after you', are typical comments. Corridor displays promote safe practices and through the use of information and communication technology (ICT) pupils are made well aware of internet safety. Some of the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 act as Junior Playground Leaders to help the younger pupils in the Infant playground and Peer Support pupils are on duty in the Key Stage 2 playground.

Pupils' consistently thoughtful behaviour continues to be a major strength of the school and is promoted well by the school's strong Christian ethos. Consequently, all pupils learn and thrive in a positive and welcoming environment. Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Pupils say that the anti-bullying week raises awareness of the different types of bullying and that bullying is rare and is dealt with quickly by staff.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning and disruption to teaching and learning is very rare. However, some pupils feel that behaviour could be better. Responses in questionnaires returned by parents and carers indicate that the vast majority feels that the standard of behaviour at school is good, with a small minority concerned that in some lessons behaviour can hinder learning. Inspection evidence shows that pupils have a clear understanding of the school's behaviour management system and in particular, what is expected of them in the classroom. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of classroom routines and know how to use equipment safely and move about the room in a sensible manner.

Attendance is above the national average. This high rate of attendance reflects well on pupils' very positive attitudes towards their learning, enjoyment and engagement in school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with the school's middle managers, form a very effective senior leadership team. They are well supported by a hard-working and dedicated staff who work very effectively as a team. The governing body is influential in providing good support and challenge. Senior staff and governors have a clear vision with high expectations, which are shared by all staff. All staff feel that the school is led and managed well.

The school's leaders and class teachers monitor pupils' progress well and this is used effectively by class teachers to inform lesson planning and identify areas for additional support. The senior leaders and governing body have accurately identified the school's strengths and areas for improvement through the school's self-evaluation processes. However, the school improvement plan does not focus sharply enough on actions to show clearly how teaching will be improved further and how monitoring of teaching is to be developed and made more rigorous in driving up achievement even further.

Nevertheless, the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because of the accurate understanding of children's needs and the use of this to inform planning for further improvement. These recent developments to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision and the involvement of class teachers and Key Stage leaders to monitor pupils' progress rigorously, demonstrate the school's good capacity for continuing to improve.

The well-planned and resourced curriculum provides stimulating learning experiences and meets pupils' needs well. It is broad and balanced and has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Classroom and corridor displays provide a vibrant learning environment and promote pupils' personal, social and academic development well. A variety of enrichment activities such as the school visit to Staircase House and visits to local parks promotes pupils' learning effectively and gives them varied and interesting experiences.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported and cared for well, particularly by the experienced support staff, to ensure that they make progress. The school is very inclusive and its ethos promotes equality of opportunity well and ensures that there is no discrimination. Safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies meet national requirements and give no cause for concern.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL6 9JJ

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us at lunchtime and those who came to read to us.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel RC Primary School is a good school. All the staff in school work really well as a team. You feel very safe in school because of the very good support and care you get from the adults who work with you. You take care of one another very well and work very hard. Your behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good and your attendance is high. Teaching is good and you learn well, but some of you feel that you could do even better and achieve more. We have asked your school to make your lessons even better by making more of the teaching outstanding. We have also asked your school to help you make even better progress by giving you more challenging tasks, setting you more challenging targets and by involving you more in your own learning. The curriculum you follow is good and helps you improve your reading, writing and mathematical skills. You say that you particularly enjoy the school trips that help to enrich your learning. The way the school promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

I hope you keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in trying to make your school even better. Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection and for your kindness and courtesy to us. We wish all of you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely,

Alan Parkinson
Lead Inspector

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