

St John Fisher and St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Woodhouse Lane, Benchill, Manchester. M22 9NW.

Inspection dates 25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The majority of pupils make good progress.
- Many children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below those generally expected. They make rapid progress in the Nursery class and good progress in many areas of learning in the Reception classes.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of making good progress, and achieving the expected level in English and mathematics has increased significantly. As a result, attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average and achievement is good.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some is outstanding. Very effective behaviour management, interesting, well-planned lessons and high expectations are features of most lessons.
- Behaviour and safety are good. This makes a significant contribution to the calm, productive atmosphere in school. Attendance has improved and is above average.
- The headteacher and staff have high expectations and are ambitious for all pupils. Senior staff are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development. Professional development opportunities are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and the good curriculum.
- The governing body provides good levels of support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In the Reception classes, children's progress in early reading and writing skills is slower than in the other areas of learning.
- Some teaching and learning, in the early part of Key Stage 2, is not as good as in later years, especially for those who were behind with their literacy and numeracy skills at the end of Key Stage 1.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, middle managers and staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including the school's documents for self-evaluation and safeguarding. They also studied standards in reading, pupils' workbooks and systems used to monitor pupils' progress.
- The five responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were considered, alongside the school's own analysis of the general and subject surveys sent to parents recently. Responses to the staff questionnaire were also checked.

Inspection team

Lynne Read, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Clare Daniel	Additional Inspector
Mark Hilton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average. A smaller than average proportion are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Around a half of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a quarter of pupils are learning English as an additional language. In total, 22 languages are spoken by the pupils.
- Over a half of pupils receive the pupil premium, which is high compared to the national average.
- The school meets the current government floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A daily breakfast club is held on the premises, open to pupils and their parents.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress in early reading and writing skills in the Reception classes by:
 - making more effective use of assessment information to set challenging tasks and move learning forward at a good pace
 - ensuring that children learn and use the full range of reading strategies, as well as phonic skills, in order to become successful readers
 - developing a wider range of reading and writing opportunities, during independent work
 - providing more opportunities for the leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage to check teaching and learning and share good practice with staff.
- Ensure that all lessons in the lower junior classes promote good progress for all groups of pupils, especially those who need to catch up with their learning, by:
 - extending the range of intervention strategies and targeted support, especially by teaching assistants, to meet the specific needs of some pupils more accurately
 - ensuring that marking and pupils' targets for learning consistently provide helpful information and support to help them improve their work
 - ensuring that managers work swiftly to raise achievement further and ensure that pupils are on track to achieve the challenging year-end targets set for them.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery class with a range of skills that are well below those usually seen. They make good progress overall through the Early Years Foundation Stage and learning is often outstanding in the Nursery class. However, progress in early reading and writing slows in the Reception classes. Whilst they acquire a sound understanding of phonics, children are less confident in using other reading strategies, such as recognising whole words or picking up clues from pictures. In addition, during independent work, they do not spend enough time practising and consolidating their early literacy skills.
- Good improvements in progress throughout Key Stage 1 over the last two years mean that pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now average by the end of Year 2. A good proportion benefit from focused intervention work during Year 1 and the majority catch up to the standard expected in reading by the end of the year.
- Pupils continue to make good progress overall in Key Stage 2 but learning is sometimes slower in the lower juniors, especially for those pupils whose attainment was lower than expected at Year 2, or those who are less confident learners. In particular, some pupils have difficulty with spelling, writing sentences and punctuation.
- As they move through the junior years, learning gathers momentum and is sometimes outstanding for the older pupils. Successful school improvement strategies have focused on mathematics this year with an increased proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and above. Reading skills develop well and most in Year 6 enjoy a range of fiction genres. They use non-fiction books efficiently for reference and study purposes. Attainment at both the expected Level 4 and above-average Level 5 is broadly in line with national averages.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those who are learning English as an additional language, are supported well throughout school. Their achievement is good and they make equal progress to their classmates. Those who are supported by the pupil premium have made much better progress in mathematics this year. They are swiftly closing the gap seen in previous years between their attainment and that of pupils who do not receive the extra funding.

The quality of teaching is good

- Most teaching is good; some is outstanding and a small amount requires improvement. Relationships are very good, explanations are clear and pupils are well motivated to learn. Lessons often include a series of short, focused tasks with clear deadlines; this ensures a good pace to learning. Opportunities for practical and collaborative working appeal to pupils of different dispositions and provide equal interest for boys and girls. Interesting class discussions and a good amount of praise encourage pupils to work hard and successfully underpin the good attitudes to learning.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, most teaching is good but there are some inconsistencies in practice. Planning generally takes account of children's interests and tasks include varied opportunities for children to choose activities, explore their world and develop independence. However, some teaching of early reading and writing skills in the Reception classes requires improvement because:
 - planning does not take sufficient account of previous assessments in order to determine exactly what children know, and need to learn next
 - reading sessions do not place enough emphasis on developing the full range of reading strategies in a balanced way
 - the range of opportunities provided for practising and consolidating skills during independent sessions are limited in scope and often uninviting. As a result, children are not sufficiently motivated to choose those activities.
- Good teaching predominates across Key Stages 1 and 2 but there are some inconsistencies in lessons for the lower junior age group. Teaching assistants are generally deployed effectively,

with clear teaching and learning objectives, and targeted support for specific groups of pupils. However, where they have a general support role across the class, their work is less effective.

- Marking and targets for pupils help them to improve their work but sometimes guidance is not clear and, therefore, of little help. A good range of intervention work supports pupils at Key Stage 1 but is not fully extended into Key Stage 2. This particularly affects the small group of Year 3 pupils who were behind with their work at the end of Key Stage 1.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There are harmonious relationships within this diverse school community. Pupils of different cultures and backgrounds show great respect for each other and incidents of a racial nature are extremely rare.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Through anti-bullying projects and lessons on personal development, they have a good understanding of different types of bullying. Pupils are well-equipped to deal with risk and know what to do if they have a problem. They assert that teachers and other adults deal swiftly with any worries they report. Incidences of bullying and exclusion have been reduced significantly and the school is now working towards eradicating them completely.
- The behaviour code is displayed widely around school; sanctions are well understood and described by pupils as 'fair'. In addition, an interesting system of rewards is valued by pupils; they encourage hard work, good conduct and consideration for others.
- Pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are enabled to cope with the conventions of school life because of skilled interventions by staff. The nurture group caters exceptionally well for individual needs. Pupils say they 'love it here'. They enjoy an exciting variety of games and activities in this carefully resourced unit and take a pride in their 'project work.'
- The very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and that bullying is dealt with effectively.
- A wide range of opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, school councillors contribute much to the day-to-day running of school and to the process of decision making.
- The work of the parent liaison officer has been instrumental in improving attendance. Persistent absenteeism has been reduced significantly and is below the national average. The breakfast club provides a good, social experience to start the day and is helping to improve punctuality.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides good, strong leadership and direction for the school and works very effectively to provide the best for pupils. Staff, managers and governors share a vision of excellence and are ambitious for their pupils. Staff morale is good and strong teamwork secures the school's highly supportive and caring ethos.
- Comprehensive evaluation systems ensure that senior leaders have a clear overview of provision and performance. An improvement plan is developed, put into action and evaluated each term. Teachers' performance is closely monitored with professional development opportunities based on the identified needs of staff. This promotes a good pace to school development and is a significant factor in the recent improved progress, attainment, behaviour and attendance. There is good capacity for this school to improve further.
- Middle leaders monitor their subjects and areas but these systems are not yet fully effective because:
 - insufficient time has been allocated for the Early Years Foundation Stage leader to check teaching and learning across the age range and to share expertise with colleagues
 - actions to remedy issues in teaching and learning for some lower junior pupils have not been implemented quickly enough.
- The curriculum is good and includes a careful balance in developing pupils' academic, practical, creative and personal skills. For example, the school choir performs to a high

standard, both locally and in national media. Pupils experience an exciting selection of activities out of school time, including sporting and competitive opportunities.

- This school is especially successful in reaching out to parents and in encouraging them to be partners in the education process. There is good attendance at the numerous courses where parents learn how to support their children at home, for example, in reading. School events and performances are also well attended which helps to maintain the productive relationship between home and school.
- Safeguarding meets requirements: the site is secure and staff vetting is rigorous.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school and staff take good account of the advice given. Together with well-planned professional development for staff, this has helped to drive through improvements, especially in reading and mathematics.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - the governing body is knowledgeable and supportive. Its members have a good range of skills and expertise that enhances leadership and management
 - governors rigorously check value for money by comparing the allocation of resources against intended outcomes, for example, they know precisely how the pupil premium funds are overcoming barriers to learning
 - governors are actively involved in checking the school's work and outcomes, and challenging managers appropriately.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105531
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	400781

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	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Wilson
Headteacher	Mr Dominic Hemington
Date of previous school inspection	24-25 February 2010
Telephone number	0161 9983422
Fax number	0161 9455616
Email address	admin@st-johnfisher-st-thomasmore.manchester.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

