

Our Lady of Grace RC Primary School

Highfield Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 3AS

Inspection dates

31 October–1 November 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.

- Pupils make good progress from their starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils regularly attain levels which are significantly higher than national averages in English. This year, attainment in mathematics has greatly improved especially for more-able pupils.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers demonstrate good questioning skills, they provide appropriate resources for practical lessons and are mindful to give pupils ample opportunities to share ideas and reflect on their learning.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and they know that they are well cared for by all staff. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are excellent. Everyone involved is unreservedly proud to be a part of Our Lady of Grace School. Older pupils relish their responsibilities and all pupils are welcoming, polite and courteous.
- The headteacher provides clear direction for the school and shares with all staff her ambitious vision for continued school improvement. She is well supported by a governing body that knows the school very well and provides a good level of challenge to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching across the school. There are occasions when either group activities or, more rarely, the initial introduction to a lesson do not provide a good level of challenge to all pupils and so their attention drifts.
- Marking in books does not always identify how pupils can improve the work that they do.
- Some staff do not model the correct letter sounds when they are teaching pupils to link letters with the sounds that they make.
- Subject leaders do not directly observe teaching in their subject which limits the impact that they can have in steering the curriculum or supporting staff.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, one local authority representative and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of the responses in 67 on-line questionnaires (Parent View) and three letters from parents.
- A range of documents was looked at, including the school's self-evaluation, data on pupil progress, monitoring documentation, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. The inspectors also examined work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Geoffrey Lawrence

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportions of pupils supported at school action and those supported at school action plus or having a statement of special educational needs are below average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and the majority speak English as their first language.
- The deputy headteacher is on secondment as an acting headteacher during the autumn term.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good or outstanding by ensuring that:
 - all parts of the lesson consistently match pupils' levels of ability
 - adults always articulate the correct sounds when linking letters and the sounds that they make
 - marking clearly indicates to pupils how to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by providing regular opportunities for subject leaders to be involved in the direct observation of teaching in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with the skills and knowledge that are typical for their age except in reading and writing where their skills are below those expected. Activities are carefully planned to encourage children to settle quickly and grow in self-esteem and independence. Children enthusiastically engage in all activities whether they are independent or adult-lead. They respond with well-thought-out answers when adults expertly question them about their learning. Children make outstanding progress in reading and writing and good progress overall. They start Key Stage 1 with slightly above average skills for their age.
- Most parents believe that their children make good progress across the school. Pupil groups, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make the same good progress as other pupils relative to their starting points. This is because their needs are swiftly identified and this leads to good quality support. For example, small group activities led by teachers and teaching assistants are accurately focused to provide the correct level of challenge to pupils in the group.
- Standards in reading are above the nationally expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Pupils enjoy reading, they are encouraged to practise their reading skills every night at home and they read every day in school.
- Fifty per cent of Year 1 pupils reached the expected levels in the phonics assessment which tests the ability of pupils to match letters and the sounds that they make. There are occasions when staff do not articulate letter-sounds correctly. Pupils then mispronounce the sounds when they are learning to match letters with the sounds that they make, which can reduce the accuracy of their reading.
- Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. More pupils than average reach or exceed the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave school. Following a determined effort to further improve standards in mathematics, especially for more-able pupils, almost half of the pupils achieved at the higher level in mathematics in 2012. This shows a big improvement in mathematical attainment brought about by the focused teaching of smaller groups.
- Pupil progress has shown an upward trend since 2009. This is in part due to the leaders' recognition that there had been some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and their taking of effective action, such as staff coaching, which is continuing.

The quality of teaching

is good

- During lessons, teachers reliably check on how well pupils understand their work. They skilfully question pupils to ascertain what they already know and question them further to make sure pupils are thinking really hard. For example, in Reception one child poured water through a funnel so that it flowed and ultimately turned a water wheel. The child was asked what was happening and she was able to provide a good explanation. She was then asked how she could slow the wheel down. This required the child to think very carefully and helped her to develop her knowledge and understanding of the process.
- Although some teachers regularly provide verbal feedback to pupils, advising them on how to make their work better, marking does not always provide the same good guidance. This reduces the opportunities for pupils to take charge of independently moving their learning forward.
- Teachers ensure that activities are well resourced and provide memorable experiences for pupils. For example, when a pirate visited the school all pupils were able to reflect on this experience to bring their writing to life.
- There is accurate pupil assessment information available to teachers. However, some teachers do not always use it consistently to plan lessons that match the learning needs of all pupils. This means that pupils' attention sometimes wavers because the work does not offer them the right

level of challenge.

- Teaching assistants often make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning by working with individuals and small groups, both inside and outside of the classroom, to ensure that pupils are supported to understand fully the lesson objective.
- Throughout their lessons pupils are provided with a number of opportunities to collaborate with other pupils and develop their speaking and listening skills. They discuss their learning, share ideas and check the work that they are doing.
- A couple of parents raised concerns regarding the quality of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. A range of evidence was analysed and confirmed that the support for pupils with additional needs is such that they make good progress alongside their peers. Furthermore, all staff are committed to Our Lady of Grace being an inclusive school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils treat adults and each other with great respect. The good quality relationships between pupils of different ages make a great contribution toward the caring ethos which is evident throughout the school. For example, older pupils help younger children to play and pray together.
- Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously; they feel honoured to act as personal assistants to staff, monitors, Eco-warriors and librarians. They recognise that taking up these roles and doing them well prepares them for their future. Year 6 pupils are steadfastly proud of their gold tie which is awarded to them to indicate that they can be absolutely relied upon to do the right thing.
- Pupils have an excellent attitude toward learning and they love coming to school. Attendance and punctuality have improved due to the diligence of staff in spreading the message of how important regular attendance is to pupils' learning. As a result, attendance is now above average.
- There is no disruption to learning caused by poor behaviour. However, behaviour is not outstanding because when teachers talk for too long or activities do not provide quite enough challenge pupils can become a little distracted and opportunities to progress in learning are limited.
- Parents believe that their children are kept safe in school and pupils agree. Pupils enjoy talks from the fire safety officers and participating in cycling proficiency training. Moreover, they have a sensible awareness of how to keep themselves safe and they recognise that there would always be an adult to talk to if they had any issues or concerns.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different forms of bullying and do not believe that any real bullying goes on in school. However, if it did they are confident that staff would deal with it quickly and effectively. This is confirmed by entries in the school's bullying log.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has high expectations for the school. She is a strong leader and shares her vision with a staff team that is entirely supportive of and committed to the school ethos.
- Changes to staffing, including the secondment of the deputy headteacher to acting headship, have been handled very well by the headteacher and governing body. Competent, confident staff have quickly stepped up to fill vacant management posts in senior and subject leadership to prevent any negative impact on the work of the school. This confirms the school's capacity to improve.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted. Pupils are given regular opportunities to work together in groups and to reflect on their behaviour, attitude and learning. Pupils engage in activities to develop cultural awareness, such as celebrating Divali and Chinese New Year. Pupils have also been introduced to other cultures through musical and artistic

experiences such as African drumming and dance performances.

- School leaders are proud of the school's place at the heart of the local community and they take every opportunity to further develop community links. For example, they invite new parents to bring their babies into school and provide afternoon tea to grandparents.
- Performance management indicates areas in which staff would like to develop and this, together with school priorities, steers the professional development provided for teachers. For example, a priority was to improve writing; the literacy lead teacher attended training and then asked pupils what they would like to write about. She also provided support for other staff to improve their skills. As a result, standards in writing have improved for the 2012 key stage tests.
- Subject leaders regularly monitor the work in pupils' books. However, they do not yet have the opportunity to monitor teaching directly in order to drive improvements in their area of responsibility.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils. It is enriched by a broad range of after-school activities, including very successful sporting achievements, chess, modern foreign languages and musical activities including a superb school choir. All these activities are thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils. The oversubscribed before- and after-school club is also highly valued by pupils and parents.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is very supportive of the school leadership. Its members have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and developmental needs. Since the last inspection governors have become increasingly well informed about pupil progress measures and can use this knowledge to challenge school leaders effectively and, thereby, contribute toward school improvement. The recently formed access-all-areas committee ensures that all pupils in school enjoy equality of opportunity.

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	105345
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	404985

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	423
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Caroline Gibb
Headteacher	Miss P J Jones
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2010
Telephone number	0161 7967254
Fax number	0161 7963391
Email address	olog@bury.gov.uk

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