

St Malachy's RC Primary School

Eggington Street, Collyhurst, Manchester, M40 7RG

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- Achievement is good. It has improved rapidly since the previous inspection.
- From starting points below typical levels, pupils reach standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Standards are rising. Pupils are making better progress than in the past. Progress is now good across the school in all subjects.
- The progress of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is generally similar to that of other pupils in the school.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language achieve particularly well.
- Teaching is good. Learning is well planned and marking clearly shows pupils what they must do to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and progress. Pupils with special educational needs are extremely well catered for and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They get on well together, both in the classroom and on the playground.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural education in the school is very strong.
- This is an improving school. In a short time the headteacher has formed a highly effective leadership team which is rigorous in checking the performance of pupils and teachers. Governors are well informed and provide appropriate levels of challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 are not moved quickly enough on to the next task when they are ready to learn more.
- On occasion instructions lack clarity and pupils are unclear what the aim of the lesson is.
- In English lessons work is not always set at the right level for the most-able pupils and so their progress slows.
- The presentation in pupils' work is still not good enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 7 teachers. Observations were undertaken jointly with members of the senior leadership team.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at pupils' exercise books with subject leaders.
- Discussions were held with representatives of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, and managers responsible for leading specific subjects and other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation relating to its own view of its performance, safeguarding policies, the school development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, behavioural records and displays around the school.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of information on how the school checks the progress of the different pupil groups.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line questionnaire, (Parent View). Inspectors had conversations with parents in the playground.
- Inspectors analysed 29 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Baljinder Khela

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- More than half of all pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic groups and over a quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement further by ensuring that:
 - pupils know what the aim of each lesson is and understand precisely what they have to do and what they are to be assessed against
 - when pupils are ready to learn more, adults move them on to more demanding work quickly
 - learning tasks in English lessons are accurately matched to the needs of the most-able pupils
 - pupils' work is always neat and well organised.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typical for their age, particularly in their understanding of the world. They settle quickly and make good progress as a result of being taught the basic skills well.
- Pupils make good progress in all year groups across Key Stages 1 and 2. This includes the many pupils from different backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language.
- At Key Stage 1 standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards are now much higher than they have been in the past five years.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. In 2013 a significantly higher than average proportion made more progress than expected in mathematics. In English the number of pupils reaching the expected level was above the national average. This good picture is set to continue in 2014, with an above average proportion of pupils on target to achieve the expected levels in all subjects and standards rising further in reading. Parents agree that their children make good progress.
- Pupils who are eligible for support funded by the pupil premium make progress similar to that of other pupils. Their attainment is about a term behind other pupils in English and about two terms behind in mathematics. The difference in attainment between pupils eligible for free school meals and that of other pupils is much less than is found nationally and the gap is closing.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good as a result of well-targeted support. Many pupils attend the Early Bird intervention groups, which take place before school starts. These and the other wide range of carefully planned group activities ensure that all pupil groups make good progress and the school provides excellent equality of opportunity.
- Achievement in lessons is consistently good. The most-able pupils achieve well particularly in mathematics, but they do not do quite as well in English because the work they are asked to do is not always hard enough to challenge them fully.
- Standards in reading are rising as a result of a more consistent approach to the teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds). A much higher proportion of pupils is now on track to achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check.
- Opportunities for writing are frequent and as a result pupils achieve well. Standards are broadly average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils understand their writing targets and have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to improve.
- Achievement in mathematics is strong throughout the school. Pupils talk positively about their mathematics lessons, which are carefully planned so that pupils are set activities which are well matched to their needs.
- Pupils' exercise books show good progress in all subjects. The presentation, however, is not good enough. Pupils' work is untidy and work in mathematics is badly organised. Teachers do not encourage this skill well enough and do not always write neatly themselves.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved rapidly since the last inspection and is now consistently good. This improvement is the major factor in the upward trend in standards in the past two years. Parents also agree that their children are taught well.
- Relationships in class are very positive and this is a strength throughout the school. Teachers know the pupils extremely well. As a result of skilful questioning, good marking and having one-to-one meetings with pupils, learning is carefully planned and is usually well matched to their ability.
- A lot of thought is put into providing appropriate resources to support pupils in their learning.

This was very evident in a mathematics lessons in Key Stage 1 where pupils were given different types of equipment to help them with their addition and multiplication. Having these resources available enabled them to produce a lot of work and make more rapid progress.

- Pupils know exactly what level they are working at and are very clear in writing and mathematics about what they need to do to reach the next stage in their learning. They appreciate the support they get from adults. One older pupil described the teaching assistant who supports her as 'inspirational'. Pupils welcome the special time they have with their teacher, discussing their work and what can be done to help them improve.
- In all subjects marking is effective. Teachers are explicit in explaining how the work can be improved and pupils talked about the time they have to read the teacher's comments and respond to them.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching is consistently good and regularly outstanding in the Nursery. Adults maintain the interest and concentration of the younger children with learning that moves at a brisk pace. Relationships are excellent, expectations are very high and as a result the children get off to a flying start in school. The Nursery class in particular is an oasis of calm and purposeful learning.
- Whilst teaching in English is good, at the beginning of some lessons it is not made clear enough what the purpose of the learning is and what the outcome is going to be. When this happens, progress is not as rapid. The introduction of new schemes to support both early reading and literacy at Key Stage 2 has helped improve the quality of teaching. Pupils now have lots of opportunities to write and practise their skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Mathematics teaching is consistently good. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They work hard and produce a lot of good quality work. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and using the mathematics subject leader to teach both Years 5 and 6 has led to pupils achieving standards much higher than expected for their age. There are still times, however, when pupils do not make as much progress as they could because adults do not move them on to the next activity soon enough and have them repeating the same skills that they have already mastered.
- Teaching assistants are always actively engaged in lessons and are an integral part of the success in teaching and the rise in standards. They skilfully lead small groups and the Early Bird intervention programmes which start before school are very well attended and help pupils to make even better progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are polite and helpful. They move around the school in a very orderly fashion in particular up and down the many steps in school! Pupils get along very well together both in the classroom and on the playground.
- The St. Malachy Creed which the pupils regularly sing reminds pupils about the need to be good friends and how to behave if they are bullied or on the Internet. There is a very strong feeling of 'community' in the school. Pupils willingly give up their own time to help each other. One pupil who attends an Early Bird mathematics intervention group every morning explained 'I help the children understand where they have gone wrong.' In the school band, older pupils help new members learn their various parts.
- The school behaviour records confirm that behaviour is good and any incidents recorded are only of a minor nature. Pupils understand the behaviour policy and say that behaviour is good. Parents also agree that pupils behave well and that their children are safe in school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare, adults look after them very well and treat them fairly. There are many opportunities within the curriculum to instruct pupils how to stay safe in different situations. Year 6 found their recent visit to 'The Crucial Crew' (training in how to respond in emergency situations) particularly helpful in this respect. Pupils understand how to stay safe when on the Internet.

- Pupils are eager to learn. The foundations of these positive attitudes are built in the Early Years Foundation Stage where the younger children display a love of learning and are determined to do their best. This continues throughout school. During the inspection there were only a small number of occasions when pupils lacked concentration as a result of either not being clear what they had to do or undertaking an activity which did not fully challenge them.
- Attendance is much improved and is now above average. Punctuality is good.

The leadership and management are good

- In a very short time the headteacher has formed both a senior leadership team and a very strong middle managers team who are responsible for leading subjects. Together they have worked tirelessly to successfully improve the quality of teaching and subsequently pupils' achievement. The pupils themselves have appreciated the improvements made. One pupil said, 'I'm proud of our school because they are always making it better for us.'
- New approaches to teaching introduced by the headteacher are now enabling pupils to make more rapid progress than in the past and certainly since the last inspection. Inspectors and school leaders agreed that these systems are still not fully established but they are sufficiently in place to put the school in a very strong position to improve further in the future.
- There is an intensive programme of checking the performance of teachers and lesson observations are frequent. Clear targets are set for teachers so they know how to improve and a very strong training programme enables them to continually develop their teaching skills.
- Middle leaders are very effective and know how teaching and learning can be improved further. They are involved in the rigorous checking of teaching and they readily share their own practice with colleagues.
- Staff support each other well and share ideas and practices to become better and better. Working with teachers from other local schools has also brought about an improvement in the quality of teaching.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. A strong sense of spirituality permeates the whole school. Pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about their work, the many educational visits and different activities they are involved in. Pupils are extremely enthusiastic about their music! They are passionate about performing, in particular the school choir and the thirty-strong band which includes guitars, keyboards, recorders and percussion. The school also provides a range of extra-curricular activities for all, which are well attended and help to develop pupils' skills beyond the standard curriculum.
- The primary school sport funding has been used effectively. There are increased opportunities to take part in sport clubs and to compete against other schools, which has led to greater participation. Healthy living is promoted through the school's involvement in the Change 4 Life programme.
- The local authority provides challenge and support to senior leaders through termly visits.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding and child protection meet statutory requirements.
- Parents agree that the school is led and managed well and they would certainly recommend the school to others.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body have a good understanding of all aspects of the school's work. Governors are very well informed by the headteacher, they make regular visits into school and they use all the information available to them so they can see how well the school is performing compared to others. This includes using financial benchmarking to compare expenditure and as a result the budget is well managed. Governors are well trained in safeguarding and matters such as understanding the school performance data and so they have been able to support and challenge the headteacher effectively, including the use of both the pupil premium and the physical education and sport funding. They understand the systems that are in place to manage the performance of teachers and that pay and promotion are linked to teachers' performance.

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	105532
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	431654

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	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Vincent Sheedy
Headteacher	Miss Nicola Madden
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2012
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