



SS John and Monica Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103478
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276932
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 27 September 2005
Reporting inspector Rajinder Harrison RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Chantry Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Moseley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Birmingham, West Midlands B13 8DW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4645868
Number on roll	209	Fax number	0121 464 5046
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	10 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Eileen Walker

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

SS John and Monica Catholic Primary is an average sized school in a residential suburb of Moseley. The school serves a wide cross section of society, with some children coming from more prosperous families but many coming from less advantaged homes. A high percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals and a very high proportion of pupils do not have English as their home language. The children come from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, the largest groups being Pakistani, Indian and Caribbean, with only 13% being of White British heritage. When they enter the school, most of the pupil's attainment is broadly average. However, many have significant gaps in their English language skills, although no pupils are entirely new to English. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is an effective school where all pupils enjoy learning and make good progress. They achieve well because teaching is good and by the time they leave the school, they reach standards that are above average. Although many pupils start school with limited skills in English, they do well in the Foundation Stage because provision is good and achieve broadly average standards, except in English where standards are still below average. The school is led and managed well. The many changes in senior staff in the last two years have been managed well to ensure that pupils' progress has not been affected. Parents are happy with the school. Their views are taken into account regularly and they are kept fully informed of developments. Pupils' personal development is good. This is as a result of the school's caring approach, where all pupils are included, where there is rich harmony and celebration of many cultures and faiths, and where every child really does matter. Since the last inspection, standards have been maintained, all the key issues have been dealt with in part and improvement is satisfactory. However, all the school's agreed systems and procedures, particularly regarding the use of assessment, have not been consistently implemented across the school, and opportunities have been missed for senior managers and governors to play a full part in checking this. There are shortcomings in resources in some subjects which restrict the activities that can be undertaken. The school is very aware of its strengths and weaknesses and is well placed to move forward. An indication of the effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation is that inspectors came to the same overall conclusions. Value for money is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- ensure that assessment procedures and systems are implemented consistently
- ensure all staff and governors play their part in checking that the school is working effectively
- improve the range, quality and quantity of resources for learning

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and pupils' overall progress is good. The school exceeded all its targets in 2005. Careful attention is paid to meet the needs of all groups effectively, including those with learning difficulties, so that they achieve well. On joining the school in the Reception class, most children have levels of skills and knowledge that are normally expected at this age in all areas of learning except communication, language and literacy. Many have significant gaps in their English language skills, and the school makes good provision to redress this.

Children make good progress in communication, language and literacy and satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning. As a result, most reach the expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. In 2004, standards declined to below average at the end of Year 2. With corrective action taken in the last school

year, standards have risen again, particularly in writing, which was a school priority. Standards at the end of Year 2 are currently average in reading, writing and mathematics. Satisfactory and sometimes good teaching results in all pupils making at least satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. Good teaching in Years 3 to 6 helps pupils achieve well and reach standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception class settle very quickly and follow clear guidelines about what is expected of them. Throughout the school, pupils are happy and very proud of their school and their achievements, enjoying everything that the school provides. They thrive in a warm, friendly environment well shaped by Catholic traditions. Attendance is in line with the national average and behaviour is good.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children of all faiths attend the weekly mass, a powerful occasion that develops their spiritual awareness and respect for other faiths. Parents are very happy with these arrangements. Pupils feel they are treated very fairly and know what is right and wrong. They appreciate the fact they can talk to staff, knowing they are safe, well supported and valued as individuals. Pupils learn to treat each other with kindness, respectfully listening to others and accepting differences in opinion. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to support younger children in reading and social activities. Pupils' appreciation of other cultures is good in a school where the rich ethnic heritage amongst pupils is seen as an asset. Pupils share their good fortune by organising events to raise funds to help others, especially through their work with the Diocese.

Pupils understand the need to take care of themselves and enjoy healthy lunches. Their enthusiasm for sport teaches them to take exercise to keep fit and healthy.

In the past, pupils have not had enough opportunities to be involved in making decisions that affect them in school but their participation in the recently established school council shows that the school takes their views seriously.

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall. High emphasis is placed on ensuring that basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are taught well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive support that is very sensitively managed so that they are confident to 'have a go' and so they too achieve

well. In the Foundation Stage, lively and exciting lessons help children make good progress. In Years 1 to 2, satisfactory and sometimes good teaching takes account of pupils' individual needs, but assessment information is not always used well enough to set even harder work for the most able pupils. In Years 3 to 6, teachers' high expectations encourage pupils to work hard and they learn quickly. Pupils love the elements of competition when teachers set tests and challenging tasks.

Where teaching is most effective, particularly in Years 5 and 6, pupils make very good progress. Planning is generally good. Support teachers and skilled teaching assistants are used to good effect to help specific pupils. Relationships are very positive and teachers help pupils develop a love of learning that is reinforced by very supportive parents. Pupils say that teachers 'make learning fun'. For example, singing, led by a visiting teacher, was a very jolly and jubilant experience, and touches of humour in a literacy lesson in Year 6 helped pupils express their ideas with confidence in front of others. Even though it has worked well to challenge its most able pupils, the school has already recognised it needs to do even more in its use of assessment to set targets for these pupils in all classes. Nevertheless, where targets are set, pupils enjoy working towards them. Occasionally, inconsistency in marking work does not always help pupils to know what to do to improve.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and a commitment to meet the needs of each child is a fundamental feature of the school. Children in the Foundation Stage are provided for well, particularly in language work, to ensure their good overall development. Provision for literacy is good throughout the school, supporting learning in other subjects. This is particularly beneficial for those pupils for whom English is not the home language. The work done by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those with special talents also helps them make good progress. Resources are limited in range, quality and quantity in some subjects and this means that some activities are limited in scope. Sports clubs, other activities, visits and visitors, such as the parish priest, actors and musicians, add richness and variety to pupils' experiences. For example, children in the after-school club made some very 'scrumptious crispy buns'. The extensive wooded school grounds are effectively used as a 'Secret Wood' to help children learn about their environment. The good emphasis on personal, social, health and citizenship education prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for, and this view is shared by their parents. Pastoral support and guidance are good, and are praised by parents and carers. All adults in the school have a genuine concern for children's welfare and provide outstanding care. Procedures

for ensuring child protection are effective. The school identifies and takes effective action to resolve any issues relating to health and safety. The day-to-day needs of children in the Foundation Stage are very effectively met so that they enjoy school. Pupils feel safe because they 'know they can talk to their teachers', who take careful note of their personal development. Academic guidance is only satisfactory overall because assessment does not work as well as it should in all subjects to help pupils see how well they are doing, and a few teachers do not always follow the guidelines consistently. All staff and governors are readily accessible to pupils and parents, and give good support at a personal level when required. Parents are very supportive of the school and help in many ways to support their children's success.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. In just three weeks the new headteacher has established good relationships and has given the school direction and purpose, building on the very good foundations laid by the acting headteacher. A strong passion and drive exists to make improvements, raise standards and take the school forward. Co-ordinators and senior managers work diligently and effectively to ensure pupils make good progress, continuing the good work started under the acting headteacher last year. This team effort involves all staff and governors. Staff new to the school feel very well supported and fully involved. Governors provide good support and are increasingly involved in the day-to-day work of the school. They have made important decisions about staffing arrangements that benefit pupils' performance and continually challenge the school to ensure good standards are maintained. Although governors are involved in devising the school improvement plan, they have not always checked rigorously enough that all the agreed actions in it were carried out fully to ensure the desired outcomes are realised. Effective procedures have been put in place to redress this since the arrival of the new headteacher. Staff and governors have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and parents' views are taken into full consideration before decisions are made. Prompt action is taken when issues arise. One good example is the action taken in 2004 to improve pupils' writing. This has had a significant impact on raising the standards pupils reached in the national tests in 2005 at the end of Year 2.

Grade: 2

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

4 October 2005

Dear Children,

You may remember we came to visit your school to see how good it was and how well you were doing. Thank you for being so friendly and telling us many interesting things! I am writing to tell you what we found out about your school.

we think you are really lucky to be at such a good school where the teachers work hard to make your lessons fun and that you are doing so well in your work

we know you are well looked after and that you can go to your teachers if you need to ask for help or tell them anything

you have a really great ICT room; your toilets really are 'super-loos' and the 'secret woods' are just magical

you play together really well and look after each other so kindly – well done

we are really pleased with how you think about people in the world who do not have all the things you have – and raise money for charity

most of you behave really well - well done for being so sensible and polite

we think you must have a really good time at school because there are so many special events you can join in. Your jolly singing on Wednesday was just brilliant!

To make the school even better, we have asked the staff and governors to:

make sure that all staff do things in the same way when new ways of doing things are introduced

make sure that all staff and governors play their part in checking that the school is working well

get some better resources to help you learn and make the building smarter.

Thank you again for showing us your school and good luck in everything you do.

Kindest regards

Rajinder Harrison Lead inspector