



St Margaret Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105533
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277373
Inspection dates 13 February 2006 to 14 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Bill Keast CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Margaret's Road
School category	Voluntary aided		New Moston
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M40 0JE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 6811504
Number on roll	258	Fax number	0161 6834895
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev O'Connor
Date of previous inspection	18 September 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J Chinnery

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school includes a 30 place nursery. Demographic changes in the area have led to a falling roll. Situated on the Manchester City border with Oldham, pupils live in an area with significant deprivation. The proportion of pupils taking a free school meal and the proportion of pupils with identified learning needs and/or disabilities are average. Few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The headteacher retired at the end of 2005 and the governors have so far been unable to appoint a successor. The acting headteacher during the inspection, seconded from her own school, had been in the school for two weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school believes its effectiveness is good but the inspectors found it to be satisfactory. The school has been a little too generous in some of its self-evaluation. Pupils attain broadly average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. Overall, teaching is satisfactory although some is exceptionally good. This variation is too wide and the most important weakness is that, while marking is accurate, it does not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work. The curriculum is good and particularly strong in the arts. Pupils in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start. Well planned activities and good teaching ensure that they settle quickly into new routines and become confident and willing learners. Pupils' personal development is good. Teachers take good care of their pupils and the school is a safe environment. Pupils with particular needs are supported well. However, older pupils in particular do not have enough individual targets to best help them raise their standards. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school runs smoothly. However, leadership has not ensured a clear evaluation of pupils' progress or that their targets are related closely to National Curriculum requirements. Although falling pupil numbers and the subsequent reduction in financial resources has had an adverse impact on staffing and aspects of leadership, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money. Despite the current lack of a permanent headteacher, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

To improve further the school should:

- make sure that pupils are making expected progress by setting targets that are closely related to National Curriculum requirements and rigorously monitoring pupils' progress towards them
- improve teaching by giving pupils better guidance on how to improve their work to achieve their individual targets
- be more critical in its self-evaluation and take effective action to tackle weaknesses.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils enter the nursery with broadly average skills and, making good progress, move into Year 1 with most having successfully reached the nationally expected early learning goals. Attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2005 was average although lower than previous years because standards of writing were lower. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. In 2005, results in national tests at the end of Year 6 were broadly average. These pupils made good progress through Key Stage 2 from their starting points. They made equally good progress in English, mathematics and science. Boys made a little more progress than girls, and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities made a little less progress than those without. No group of pupils, however, made significantly less

progress than similar pupils nationally. Over the last five years, results have risen in line with the national trend. A significant but isolated drop in standards in 2004 was related to that particular group of pupils. The school met its appropriately challenging targets for the proportion of pupils reaching above the nationally expected standard but did not quite meet those for the proportion reaching average standards. Pupils currently in Year 6 had much higher attainment when they entered Key Stage 2 and the significantly higher school targets for 2006 reflect this. However, these pupils' current standards are below what they need to be to reach these targets and their progress is satisfactory rather than good, as systems for tracking their progress lack sufficient rigour.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Parents are extremely satisfied with this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are well behaved and are proud of the school and its achievements. They are polite and helpful to visitors and to members of the school community and strongly reflect the school's Christian ethos. Isolated instances of poor behaviour are dealt with appropriately. Pupils say that bullying is decreasing and is dealt with effectively. Attendance has slipped below the national average but is improving thanks to the school's focussed efforts to discourage the taking of holidays during term time and by very early contact with the parents and carers of absent pupils. Pupils act safely and understand about keeping healthy. The recently formed and energetic School Council is already making an impact on improving the school environment.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop an understanding of other faiths and cultures. Well developed citizenship and personal, health and social education programmes result in pupils being well informed about a range of issues. Year 4 pupils confidently gave an assembly that used their outstanding dramatic and musical abilities to present a strong religious and moral message. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and their good personal development is further supported through their involvement in the My Manchester project, visits and the wide range of school clubs.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory rather than good as recorded in the school's own evaluation. Although examples of good and outstanding lessons were seen, the variation and inconsistency in teaching is too wide. Generally, teachers' subject knowledge is secure. Good relationships are established so that pupils feel confident and at ease. As a result they behave well and work hard. Teachers use questioning skills effectively especially to include less confident pupils so that they

feel part of what is going on in the classroom. In some lessons learning is particularly effective. These lessons are planned well and pupils are very clear about what they are expected to achieve. A range of methods is used to suit the different ways in which pupils learn. Lessons move with pace and teachers convey their enthusiasm. Pupils really enjoy these lessons. Other lessons, however, do not have this high level of challenge to ensure the best progress. Learning outcomes are not always made clear and referred to during the lesson so sometimes pupils lose track of what they are supposed to learn. Not all teachers insist on pupils' full attention so some miss out on what is said. Generally, marking does not sufficiently inform pupils of what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum meets statutory requirements and takes account of the full range of pupil's abilities. It gives pupils a wide experience and opportunities to learn in a range of ways and is particularly well planned in the Foundation Stage. Provision for design and technology has improved and now meets requirements. Provision for information and communication technology has also improved although teachers do not yet make use of it to support learning in other subjects. The strength in the school's provision for the arts has deservedly gained the national Artsmark award. Close collaboration with a secondary school and the Italian consulate extends learning opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 through French or Italian lessons.

Pupils' enthusiastic involvement in a good range of activities outside the classroom helps foster their skills and interests in sports, crafts and the Arts. High quality performances are an enjoyable and important feature of the school's calendar. A residential visit for Year 6 pupils supports their learning about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and constructive relationships and contributes well to their capacity for future well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Overall, provision in this area is satisfactory. School procedures ensure that children are safe and well cared for. Effective procedures for child protection are in place. Appropriate safety practices and risk assessments are undertaken and a record maintained. Pupils say they feel safe in school and in the playground. Good relationships ensure pupils have an adult they feel they can trust. The needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly identified. These pupils are supported well to play their part in the life of the school and achieve as well as they can.

Systems for setting targets for pupils lack rigour. General group targets do not support individual progress particularly effectively. Pupils rarely have specific individual targets. While older pupils may know their attainment in National Curriculum terms they do not have a sufficiently clear and focused understanding of how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Parents are understandably concerned about the current lack of a permanent headteacher. Despite several advertisements, governors and the local authority have been unable to make a suitable appointment although they have put temporary arrangements in place. The individual pupil is clearly at the centre of what the school seeks to do. The school works hard and effectively to provide an appropriate education for all pupils, including some with quite severe learning difficulties. The reduction in teaching staff, because of falling pupil numbers, has meant that some subject areas do not have subject leaders. Staffing costs take a higher proportion of the reduced financial resources and governors have had to be very prudent. They have used limited resources effectively and ensured that the school meets its legal requirements. Although very supportive of their school and recognising many of its strengths, they have not been sufficiently challenging. Appropriate action has been taken to tackle weaknesses identified through self-evaluation but evaluation is not sharp enough to ensure that teachers' hard work and commitment is most effectively focused. Parents', and increasingly pupils', views are sought and the school has responded to several issues raised. Although in 2005 Year 6 pupils made good progress, systems for tracking pupils' progress lack sufficient rigour so that current Year 6 pupils are not on track to meet the targets the school has agreed with the local authority. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection. Most issues raised by the previous report have been effectively tackled and additional initiatives undertaken. However, the important issue relating to using information from assessments to target individual need remains to be tackled.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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?	3	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?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	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	3	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

Thank you for welcoming us and helping us when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out about the things you like doing and what your school is doing for you.

We saw that you behave well and that this helps you to work hard and learn in lessons. You are very considerate towards each other and your teachers who take good care of you. You told us you felt safe at school and that you felt your new school council was giving you a say in the development of your school. We think that your personal development is good, helped by all the things your school does for you. Teaching is satisfactory but where it is good you really enjoy your lessons. Your teachers provide good opportunities for you to learn both in the class and in all the other activities, clubs and visits you have. Your opportunities for music, art and drama are particularly good and we hear good accounts of the high quality performances you give during the year. We think the leadership of your school is satisfactory and we understand your anxiety while your governors try to find you a new headteacher.

There are some things which we think could be improved to help you learn even better. We have asked your teachers to look more carefully at how well the school is performing, although you will not notice this. We have also asked them to set you more individual targets for what you ought to be able to do in your different years. We have asked them to help you to understand what these mean and to mark your work in a way that helps you understand what you need to do next to reach your targets.

You can help your teachers to help you by listening carefully all the time, working hard and, for some of you, coming to school more regularly.