



St Charles' RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105955
LEA Salford
Inspection number 277451
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Delia Hiscock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Emlyn Street (off Moorside Road)
School category	Voluntary aided		Swinton, Manchester M27 9PD
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7944536
Number on roll	221	Fax number	0161 7285162
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mgr P Smith
Date of previous inspection	22 May 2000	Headteacher	Mrs M Greaves

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 5 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	Inspection number 277451
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular small school situated in Swinton, on the edge of the City of Salford, serves an urban population. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that of most schools, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and recently a small number of pupils have arrived from outside the United Kingdom, most of whom are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils on roll has increased slightly in the last three years. The school has gained an award from the Basic Skills Agency for a second time.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school provides a good quality of education. It has an accurate view of its performance. Value for money is good. The clear vision of the headteacher, strengths of senior leadership and management and an uncompromising emphasis on raising standards place it in a strong position to continue to improve. Good teamwork has helped to develop shared approaches within the distinctive values of this faith school which fosters pupils' aspirations and academic abilities well. Consequently, pupils achieve consistently well and standards are above average at the end of Year 6. Within this broad picture, recent developments in writing have resulted in outstanding achievement for many pupils. Alongside this success, very effective teaching in mathematics in Year 6 has resulted in an exceptionally high level of attainment by those pupils who have a particular thirst for the subject. Pupils' personal development, their well-being, and the care, guidance and support they receive are strong areas in the life of the school. All pupils know that they matter.

Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good and this gives children a good start to their education. However, the school recognises that assessment in the Foundation Stage is not yet as sharp as it might be to help children make even better progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and some lessons really sparkle. The curriculum is effective, meeting pupils' needs well. Improvement in provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good but pupils do not make sufficient use of computers across all subjects to enrich their learning. New curriculum leadership teams have been recently established and mark an exciting new phase in the school's plans for improvement. Parents, carers and pupils are enthusiastic about their school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of assessment in Nursery and Reception.
- Develop the use of ICT across all subjects to enhance learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. They get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception and by the time they finish Year 6 standards are above average, showing that they make good progress during their time at the school. This progress is consistently good across all key stages.

Standards have been consistently high for several years and were maintained in national test results for science in 2005 despite an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in this small year group and an influx of pupils new to the United Kingdom. These factors meant that standards in 2005 in English and mathematics were not as high as usual, although they remained above average and all groups of pupils made at least good progress. The school is on course to meet

its challenging targets this year. Attainment in writing is now exceptionally high, the result of very successful strategies implemented to raise achievement. Higher attaining pupils in the current Year 6 attain at an exceptionally high level in mathematics and their achievement is outstanding, the result of specialist teaching that inspires and really challenges. Some of these pupils have tackled the 'World Class Tests in Mathematics' which are set for gifted mathematicians and really stretch their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They love coming to school and this is reflected in their sustained high levels of attendance. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is good. Pupils are confident and courteous in the way in which they speak to each other. Behaviour is good and attitudes to learning are positive. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and willingly take a role in making decisions about their school. The Family Action Groups ensure that all pupils have a voice and enable pupils to take part in decision making. Pupils are given plenty of scope to suggest and implement ideas, taking great pride in the impact of their work. As one child commented, 'We needed some more after-school clubs so some of us are organising a chess club.' The school's emphasis on promoting pupils' well-being gives them a good understanding of healthy lifestyle choices and they are encouraged to become safety conscious from an early age. Pupils are keen to make the most of what their school offers. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. They are very aware of the differences between religions and some traditions but their awareness of cultural diversity is no better than satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. There are high expectations, good subject knowledge and outstanding specialist teaching in mathematics. Really good relationships and the emphasis on the basic skills in literacy and numeracy are proving successful. Where features of teaching are outstanding, new technology is very well harnessed, and teaching is innovative and adds zest to learning so pupils are inspired. In 'Big Writing', for example, exciting methods used by staff reflect media techniques and, consequently, pupils soak up the unfolding drama of digital images thirstily. They thoroughly enjoy capturing imaginative ideas and powerful words on to paper.

Each pupil feels that their contribution is important. In turn, they are eager to learn, concentrate very well and share with others their views about the work they do. Assessment is used very well in Years 1 to 6, helping pupils to have a clear and ready grasp of what they are learning although, in the Foundation Stage, assessment is not as effective. Occasionally, tasks set for the highest attaining pupils do not stretch them enough in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and has steadily improved in breadth since the last inspection. It meets the needs of all pupils and fosters academic gifts very well. The school places great emphasis on developing and extending skills in literacy and numeracy. It has invested in new computers to support the progression of skills in ICT. However, this provision is not yet used sufficiently to help pupils think creatively and imaginatively and to allow higher attaining pupils and those with talents to forge ahead in a range of subjects. The school recognises the need for pupils to make more links in their learning between different subjects and has started to address this through 'themed weeks'. The school provides a good range of enrichment opportunities that contribute well to the pupils' enjoyment, confidence and self-esteem. The curriculum is also enriched well by some specialist provision. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good overall but children do not have quite enough options open to them to follow up their own ideas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of the care, guidance and support pupils receive is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy in school, that they trust the adults who work with them and know exactly who to turn to if they need help. Child protection and other checks and risk assessments are in place and vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and supported. Parents express very positive views about the school. They have good relationships with the teachers and this benefits their children's education. Arrangements for settling new pupils into school and for transfer between classes and key stages are good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported through the school's effective links with outside agencies. The systems for tracking pupils' academic progress and personal development of pupils in Years 1 to 6 are effective. Teachers know their pupils well, setting relevant class and group targets. Pupils are very much aware of these and are clear about 'the next steps' for them as individuals and understand what they have to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher, complemented by the work of the deputy headteacher, is centred on a clear commitment to high standards and to ensuring that pupils achieve well. These aims permeate the work of the school and pupils rise to the high expectations of them. Leadership commitment to good personal development and the well-being of all has created an impressive climate for learning that meets the needs of all pupils. Consequently, they strive to do their best. Assessment is used by senior leaders as a powerful means of ensuring that, wherever possible, pupils make no less than consistently good progress, although school leadership recognises that the use of

assessment in the Foundation Stage is not yet as effective as elsewhere. Astute monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, effective performance management, good use of resources and skilled recruitment are key features that support pupils' progress and have accelerated it particularly well in writing. There has been good improvement in ICT since the previous inspection. Newly created curriculum teams are set to develop further their leadership skills. These too help to place the school in a good position to move forward. Parents, carers and pupils think very well of their school though a few parents would like to be more involved in the decisions made. Governance is diligent, offering effective support to the leadership team and helping to establish a children's centre.

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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	2	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	2	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	2	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

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. We were impressed by your helpfulness and kindness towards us. This letter is to tell you what we think about your school. We would like you to share it with everyone in the family group.

We think that your school is a good one. We really liked the way that you all get on well together. We can see that you welcome children who join your school, sometimes from other places in the world. You help them to settle quickly. We think that you work hard in lessons and behave so thoughtfully towards each other. Your writing is absolutely super! Well done! What a good skill to have! We really liked the way that you check what you have written and check again to see if you can 'uplevel' your work.

We agree with you that teachers and staff work hard to make lessons just right for you. We think that this is why you learn well, especially when you have an extra bit of help. We think it would be super if you could use computers in lots more ways to help you to learn even more. We have also asked teachers if they could spread their super assessment work to Nursery and Reception.

We could see also that you have learned such a lot about how to keep safe and healthy, and to care about others. Keep up your good work! We wish you good luck for the future.