



St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105970
LEA Salford
Inspection number 277458
Inspection dates 5 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Marie Cordey CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hadfield Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Higher Broughton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Salford, Manchester M7 4XG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7923973
Number on roll	214	Fax number	0161 7922896
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Fr David Macfarlane
Date of previous inspection	9 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs J McDermott

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is a slightly smaller than average voluntary aided Roman Catholic school in an area of mixed housing in the inner city area of Salford. Just over half of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, including African, Polish and Czech and many are not fluent in speaking English. Many pupils leave and start the school at different points in their primary education. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average and just over a quarter of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained the Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing and governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

When children start school many lack the skills and knowledge typical of three-year-olds. Nevertheless, standards and achievement and expectations of what pupils can achieve are all too low. Teaching and learning are inadequate overall and not good enough to improve the progress of pupils. Achievement and standards have deteriorated in the past two years; standards in the current Year 6 have declined further and are now exceptionally low. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory because of satisfactory teaching. Assessment information is not used effectively to set sufficiently challenging targets and to check pupils' progress closely enough. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are insufficiently robust to bring about the necessary improvements at a fast enough pace. The school has worked hard to move forward but various initiatives have not been totally suited to pupils' needs and therefore have only been partially successful. The school does not demonstrate the capacity to improve, and it provides unsatisfactory value for money. However, the leaders of the school welcome pupils from a wide range of backgrounds and much effort is taken to ensure they settle well. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and relationships are harmonious. A strength of the school is the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils are caring of each other and sensitive to the needs of different faiths and cultures. Provision for their care, guidance and support is satisfactory overall.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement throughout the school especially for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality of teaching and raise expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation and the use of assessment data to accelerate pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement and standards are too low. Over the past two years standards have fallen; they have further declined for the current Year 6 pupils, whose standards are exceptionally low. This picture of underachievement has not been tackled successfully. Pupils have not met their targets by a significant margin. The pupils' achievement has also declined; last year it ranked in the bottom 1% in the country. The reasons for low standards and inadequate achievement are the staff's low expectations of pupils' performance, the limited use of assessment and some inadequate teaching. Pupils'

writing is much poorer than their reading; they are not given enough tasks where they have to write at length. There are also too few opportunities for them to learn investigative skills in science. The school's efforts to enable pupils to reach the levels they are capable of are not good enough. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked-after children and pupils for whom English is not their first language do not achieve as well as might be expected. Children enter school with low levels of attainment, particularly in speech and social skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, although they do not reach the levels appropriate for their age. The school's recent results in the national assessments for Year 2 have risen but the overall improvement is too slow.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, and their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good. Children in the Foundation Stage learn to share with others and to tell the difference between right and wrong. However, a few children do not behave as well as they should and need regular attention from teachers. Throughout the school, pupils from a wide range of cultures and home backgrounds get on well. They work and play happily together and help each other when the need arises. Smiling faces are proof of pupils' enjoyment. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall: most attend regularly but a significant minority are persistently absent. Most pupils are well behaved and show respect for their teachers and for other pupils. Pupils have good relationships with staff, have few concerns about bullying and feel safe and cared for in school. Although staff stress the need for regular exercise and a sensible diet, pupils have only just begun to appreciate how important this is to their health and well-being. Pupils readily take on responsibilities and they relate well to others but weaknesses in their literacy and numeracy often leave them short of the basic skills they need for later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning and that of assessment is inadequate. Because teaching is not challenging enough to promote learning and the expectations for the quality and quantity of work are too low, pupils underachieve. The pace of lessons is often too slow, as for instance in a science lesson when pupils spent too long copying instructions rather than working on the task itself.

Better teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 lead to pupils making satisfactory progress in the younger classes. Teaching works best when pupils are actively involved, as seen in a briskly paced and challenging lesson in Year 2. There is too much inadequate teaching in Key Stage 2. Pupils do not exert themselves in these inadequate lessons; they work comfortably on low-level tasks which do not

challenge their abilities. Teachers do not plan lessons to match what pupils are capable of achieving; as a result the pupils do not make the progress they should. Target setting is at an early stage and pupils are not generally aware of how they are doing in their work or exactly what to do in order to improve it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils study all the required subjects. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage provides children with a suitable balance of experiences covering all the required areas of learning. Although most pupils find lessons interesting, the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 promotes better learning than that in Years 3 to 6. Close attention is paid to the content so that it reflects and celebrates the cultural diversity of the pupils. This is evident in displays around the school, such as the attractive life-sized sculptures produced by pupils during lessons with a visiting artist. The programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship supports pupils' development and helps them acquire important personal skills. Older pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities but there are only limited opportunities for the younger ones. Visits to places of educational interest, including residential visits, add further enrichment. Provision is made to promote pupils' basic skills but these remain weak because work is not matched closely enough to pupils' needs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. All staff have an understanding of the pupils' pastoral needs and work hard to provide a welcoming environment in which the pupils feel safe and secure. The caring ethos of the school promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Pupils know that they can talk to staff if they are troubled. Behaviour is constantly monitored and pupils are safeguarded. Recent initiatives to improve behaviour are having a positive impact and behaviour is satisfactory overall. Risk assessments are carried out and arrangements for child protection are in place. Teaching assistants provide sensitive support, helping pupils to participate in lessons. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress are at an early stage of development. They are detailed but insufficiently robust to help accelerate pupils' progress or to inform the pupils how well they are learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. Although management systems are developing the school does not have the capacity to improve quickly enough. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance do not provide the clear and sharply focused information necessary to increase pupils' progress. The school has been involved in improvement initiatives, such as the Intensifying Support Programme with the local authority, but the headteacher and senior leadership team

have had difficulty adapting them to the needs of the pupils and consequently they have been only partially successful. Nonetheless, the leadership and management have been effective in establishing a calm orderly school, which welcomes and includes pupils from a wide range of different backgrounds. Parents are also welcomed into school and due account is taken of their views. Governors are regular visitors to the school and support its work conscientiously. They have expressed concerns about the school's poor showing in the national tests but lack adequate systems for evaluating pupils' progress for themselves. They have not been able to ensure that pupils' underachievement is 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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	4	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	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	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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 to your school, you were very polite and thoughtful. The things we liked were:

- the way you are taught to respect and care for yourselves and others
- your improved behaviour.

We have decided that your school needs special measures, which means that your headteacher will have some help in making your school better by:

- making sure that all lessons are planned to expect you to achieve your very best and improve your standards
- ensuring that the people in charge of the school know how to make it better
- checking how well you are doing and setting you clear targets so that you can reach higher standards.

Best wishes for your future.