



# St Alphonsus RC Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106360  
**LEA** Trafford  
**Inspection number** 277539  
**Inspection dates** 20 June 2006 to 21 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Mark Williams HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Hamilton Street off Stretford Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Old Trafford, Manchester M16 7PT
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 872 5239
<b>Number on roll</b>	202	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 877 8932
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Michelle O'Sullivan
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Tina Birds

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 20 June 2006 - 21 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277539
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a smaller than average primary school, serving an area of social deprivation. Over half the pupils are entitled to free school meals and nearly two thirds are from minority ethnic groups. These figures are well above the national averages, as is the proportion of pupils who start or leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year. Twenty eight per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; this is above average. The proportion of pupils who do not have English as their first language is average.

The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## **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 a good school providing a good education for its pupils. It provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation overall but find achievement and the curriculum to be good rather than satisfactory.

All the main aspects of the school's work are good and enable pupils to make good progress in their learning, personal development and well-being. This is because the pupils make a good start in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception class) and this progress is maintained throughout the school. The teaching and the curriculum are good and there is well matched support for pupils with social and/or emotional needs, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with English as an additional language. The school makes effective use of information about what the pupils can already do. It ensures the good care, guidance and support that lead to pupils' attitudes and behaviour being good.

The school knows itself well and benefits from strong and effective leadership. It has plans of good quality to raise standards further but they are not always sufficiently clear about what pupils should achieve. There are good systems of self-evaluation which the school recognises would benefit further from greater participation from curriculum leaders and governors. The school knows the largest obstacles to raising standards are the very low communication, literacy and language skills with which pupils enter school. Its most recent efforts have been focused in these areas.

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve communication, literacy and language skills by:

developing pupils' confidence in speaking and providing opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum

specifying more clearly in improvement plans what gains pupils are expected to make in these skills.

- Involve curriculum leaders and governors more fully in school self-evaluation.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils enter school with communication, literacy and language skills that are well below those found nationally. The low level of these skills and the high proportion of pupils who start or leave the school during term time present obstacles to the achievement of high standards, particularly in English. However, despite these factors, nearly all pupils attain standards at the end of their time in school in English, mathematics and science that are in line with the national average. This represents good progress across the school. Progress is also good in the Foundation Stage;

although standards here are below national expectations, children progress well from their low starting points.

Pupils' good progress is the result of good teaching, well matched support for pupils with social and/or emotional difficulties, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language, and the effective use of information about what the pupils can already do. Targets for pupils' performance are challenging and reflect the high expectations the school has for its pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are good.

Pupils are enthusiastic. They are friendly, helpful and kind, and show respect to adults and to each other. They behave well in lessons and during playtimes. Typically, they say 'school is fun and the teachers are lovely' and any problems they may have are sorted out. Pupils respond well to the encouragement and rewards they receive for their good behaviour. Attendance rates are satisfactory and the school works well with parents to ensure that nearly all pupils arrive regularly on time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils embrace their Catholic faith and value the school's diversity of cultures, for example in the artwork they produce. Pupils are aware of their responsibilities towards themselves and others. Year 5 and 6 pupils, for example, act as 'playtime buddies' to the younger pupils. There is a strong community spirit which is enhanced by the contribution of the well established school council. Pupils make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) and this supports the development of their economic well-being. However, progress in the latter is hindered by low levels of communication, literacy and language development.

The school has achieved Healthy Schools status and pupils regularly make choices that enable them to stay safe and lead a healthy lifestyle; for example, by choosing to eat fruit at break and lunchtimes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. All pupils make good progress.

Lessons are planned well and include clear learning goals and a range of activities that provide good support and challenge to pupils of all abilities. Good opportunities exist for group and independent work. Pupils discuss tasks well in these situations but they are less confident in using their speaking skills when they are talking in front of the whole class.

Teachers make good use of a variety of resources and audio-visual aids, including ICT. These, coupled with some excellent questioning, ensure lessons are stimulating and enjoyed by the pupils. Lessons proceed at a good pace and teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning. Teachers' marking is thorough and, as well as praising pupil success, gives clear guidance on how to improve in the next steps of learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is of good quality and is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils. It meets all statutory requirements.

Changes were made to the curriculum in September 2005 in order to provide greater opportunities for enjoyment, diversity and creativity. These changes have been a success and, for example, enable pupils to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding through learning in art, music and dance. Good provision exists for pupils' personal, social and health education through the extensive sporting activities and use of expert coaches. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy learning Italian and can write simple phrases in the language. The curriculum supports pupils' progress well. However, there are limited opportunities for extended writing across all subjects.

There is a good range of before- and after-school activities including music, sports, craft and construction clubs which extend pupils' skills development well. Nearly two thirds of all pupils participate in these activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support provided is good. The school cares deeply for its pupils. Health, safety and child protection procedures, enhanced by links with outside agencies, ensure that pupils are safeguarded well. Parents value this care and support. Arrangements for pupils starting school and for those moving on to secondary schools are good.

Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress over time are effective. Pupils have an understanding of their targets and of what they need to do to improve. Pupils with social and/or emotional needs, with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress because of the good support they receive from the learning mentor, teaching assistants and specialist teachers.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good and benefit from the good, strong leadership of the headteacher. She demonstrates her commitment to the school and acts as a good role model in her approach to pupils, staff and parents, who support

her well. Pupils and parents appreciate the inclusive, caring and sensitive ethos of the school.

The effective leadership team are focused on priorities to raise standards and support pupils' personal development and well-being. Good procedures for self- evaluation take into account the views of staff, governors, pupils and parents. Measures are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the school, including the quality of teaching and learning. These are led by the headteacher and are supported by curriculum leaders and governors, although there is scope to involve these groups more fully in this work. Targets for improvement are sometimes too general. As a result, evaluations do not focus sufficiently yet on what impact is intended on pupils' progress and personal development.

The headteacher, bursar and governors' finance committee manage the available resources well and funds are used appropriately to improve the quality of education and school environment. The school runs well on a day to day basis and promotes positive attitudes to learning.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

As you know, Mrs Murphy and I visited your school recently. I am writing to you now to let you know what we found out. First of all though, I would like to say thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us both and the way in which you freely gave your time to let us know your views. We are both very grateful to you all.

You will be pleased to know that we agree with you, your parents, your teachers and the governors that St Alphonsus is a good school. We liked the way the school cares for you and were impressed by your good attitudes and behaviour. The teachers and support staff teach and support you well and you have a good range of before and after school activities to choose from. Mrs Birds ensures the school is run well and she does a good job in making sure everything that goes on helps you to make good progress in your work and prepares you well for growing up.

So what can be done to make your school even better? Mrs Birds agrees with us that you need more opportunities to develop your speaking skills in front of the whole class and to use your writing skills across all subjects. She also agrees your teachers and governors can help her more in looking at what your school does well and what could be done better.

We know you all want to make your good school even better because we can see your pride in your school. We know you will all work hard with the teachers, support staff and Mrs Birds to do just that!

We wish you every blessing and success for the future.