



St Richard's Roman Catholic Primary School Atherton

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106498
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277575
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Peter Jones CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Flapper Fold Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Atherton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M46 0HA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 882980
Number on roll	187	Fax number	01942 894830
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs M Hurley
Date of previous inspection	7 February 2000	Headteacher	Mr P Brierley

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a community of varied social and economic backgrounds. Pupils' attainment on entry is average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are a small number of refugee pupils. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds the Investors in People and Eco Bronze and Silver awards.

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, and better than the school judges. This is because it has maintained high standards and good progress for its pupils in challenging circumstances. It provides good value for money. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are set challenging targets, make good progress, and consistently reach above average standards in national tests. This is because the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and leadership and management are good. The school's assessment systems are good, but marking does not always make pupils aware of what they need to do next to improve their work, and this hinders progress. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are well monitored by senior management, but this role is not consistently carried out by all subject coordinators, and this affects overall progress. Recent test results show the success of the school's efforts to improve the performance of its higher ability pupils. The average ability pupils achieve in line with others overall, though, sometimes, teachers do not provide work in all subjects that is precisely matched to their needs. Pupils' personal development and well-being, underpinned by the school's Catholic ethos, is good. Pupils are encouraged to think and work independently, and thrive on the responsibility the school gives them as school councillors or eco warriors. They enjoy school, as shown by the good attendance. Pupils are aware of health and fitness issues. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work. The school is well led and managed, and well supported by the capable governing body. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject coordinators in all curriculum areas.
- Make certain that the quality of marking is consistently good across the school so that all pupils are given effective guidance on how they may improve their work.
- Ensure that work set in all subjects always matches the needs and abilities of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards and achievement are good. Children enter the school with average levels of ability, and, thanks to the good teaching they receive, make good progress in the Reception class. Good progress is maintained through Key Stage 1, and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are consistently reaching standards and making progress above national expectations. Pupils are given challenging targets that are regularly reviewed. The school's assessment and tracking systems are very good, and marking of pupils' work is conscientious. However, it does not always provide pupils with the information they need to improve further, and this hinders progress. Pupils with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities, and the small number of refugee pupils are well supported and progress well. The school's programme to improve the performance of its higher ability pupils is beginning to bear fruit, particularly in English. Whilst lower ability pupils are well supported, the progress of those with average ability is slowed, because the work set does not always meet their needs. The school is also benefiting from the recent impressive improvements to its accommodation and resources that are contributing to the improved standards and progress of its pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school operates as a happy, orderly and inclusive learning community. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance and the enthusiasm they bring to their work. One pupil's comment that, 'we work hard but have great fun too!' was typical of many which inspectors heard during their visit. Pupils' behaviour is good and they are thoughtful for the needs of others. Assemblies and religious education lessons provide a strong framework for pupils' spiritual and moral development. Older pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in school and to develop their initiative, as, for example, when the young eco warriors group successfully devised and led a paper recycling project. The school has a tradition of good provision for music and sporting activities and, in spite of a brief interruption while site improvements took place, this is well maintained, through the curriculum and in club and choir activities. The school council gives pupils opportunities to influence decision-making and their views are taken seriously. Pupils understand about healthy lifestyles and how to avoid the risks that threaten them. Good teaching in literacy and numeracy, and opportunities for collaboration and teamwork in lessons, combine to prepare the pupils well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good across the school. Pupils respond well in lessons and work productively. This is reflected in the good outcomes in national tests. Supportive relationships make pupils feel happy and secure in school and create good conditions for learning. More opportunities are being provided for pupils to work both collaboratively, testing out their ideas, and independently, establishing good study habits. Teachers know the pupils well and assess their progress regularly. Work is regularly marked, but the marking does not always provide pupils with the guidance they need to reach the next level in their learning. In general, lessons are well planned, although more suitable activities for pupils of average ability would enable them to make more rapid progress. Teachers are gaining expertise in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons and this adds a further dimension to their work and to the pupils' interest and enjoyment. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed, working in partnership with the teachers. This ensures that pupils with

learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Effective systems support early identification of problems, so that resources can be allocated to ensure that pupils' additional needs are met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. It is successfully developing a more thematic approach, as seen in the excellent Year 5 work on the Second World War that combines impressive work from all subjects. The school is well placed to extend these cross-curricular links, to bring further enrichment and enjoyment to its pupils. Pupils are encouraged to use a range of good resources, including technology, to successfully increase their independent working and research skills. The school's high quality improvements to its accommodation and facilities have contributed to the improvements in the personal development and progress of all pupils.

There is an extensive range of activities, including music and sport, which develop pupils' interests and attributes. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported both in and out of the classroom. All pupils benefit from extensive provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares well for its pupils. Systems are in place to ensure child protection and safe recruitment of staff. Pupils have respect for the adults in school and are confident in their support. Parents and carers value the school and are pleased with the standards their children achieve. The school communicates well with parents in order to involve them positively in their children's learning. Progress is tracked carefully and the data gained is used when targets are set. Pupils know their learning targets and understand they must work hard to achieve them. However, they do not always fully understand what they need to do to improve their work. Pre-school induction is well managed, with a series of visits for the children in the term before they start school. There are strong links with the high school, so that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors judge that leadership and management are good, and better than the school's modest judgement. This is because the school, well led by the headteacher and his skilled deputy headteacher, has maintained and improved the overall quality of education for pupils, in spite of some challenging circumstances. These include the successful management of the school through a long and difficult building programme, and contingency arrangements, made necessary by staffing issues. The school ensures that pupils are set realistic, yet challenging targets, and that they make good progress

towards them. The monitoring and development of teaching and learning by senior staff have helped to maintain good standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning by subject coordinators is not consistent across all areas of the curriculum, and this slows progress in some subjects. The school is successfully implementing strategies to raise the performance of its higher ability pupils. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Professional development opportunities are good for all staff.

The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies areas for improvement. Finances are rigorously managed and used efficiently. The energetic and capable governing body provides good support to the school. It celebrates the school's successes and also asks the questions needed to bring further improvement. The issues identified in the previous report have been effectively tackled. Standards continue to rise and the school has good capacity to improve further and provides good value for money.

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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	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	2	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

Thank you for being friendly and for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that are happening in your school.

What we liked most about your school

- You like coming to school and everyone gets along very well together.
- Your school council and eco warriors do a great deal for you and the school.
- We know that your headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have good ideas to make your school even better.
- Teachers and classroom assistants work hard to help you to learn.
- Your behaviour is good and you work hard.
- The school keeps you safe and happy.
- We know that you enjoy the extra-curricular sports and music activities.

What we have asked the school to do now

- We would like your teachers to give you more helpful comments when they mark your work, to help you improve.
- We would like your teachers to make sure that the work set in all your subjects matches your abilities.
- We would like your teachers to make sure that everything is being done to check that you are learning as much as possible in all subjects.

We appreciated talking to you and watching you learn. Well done! You should be very proud of yourselves and your school. We wish you well for the future.