



St Martin de Porres Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103467
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286670
Inspection date 18 October 2006
Reporting inspector Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Oakland Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Moseley
Age range of pupils	4-11		Birmingham B13 9DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4645500
Number on roll (school)	201	Fax number	0121 4644691
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mark Drugan
		Headteacher	Jackie Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	21 May 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves a culturally and socially diverse area. Pupils are from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and just over a third are White British. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The percentage with learning difficulties is below average. When children enter the Reception Year, their attainment is a little below the level expected for their age.

The present headteacher was appointed two years ago following an unsettled period in the school's leadership and management. There have been many other staff changes since the last inspection.

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 that is improving rapidly and already has some outstanding features. Parents are pleased with it and particularly value the exceptionally high quality of the care, guidance and support provided for their children. Pupils really enjoy school. As one pupil said, 'We have to work hard but it's fun.' The school provides its pupils with a safe and friendly environment in which each one of them is valued. Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Behaviour is exceptionally good. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives and have an extremely good awareness of how to keep healthy and safe.

Exceptionally good leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. Self-evaluation is penetrating and highly effective. The headteacher provides an outstandingly clear educational direction and is extremely well supported by the whole staff team. All class teachers, as well as those who are senior managers, know that they are 'leaders of learning'. As a result, there is tremendous commitment to improving the school. Pupils know that their views count too. School council members say that, 'It is not just the teachers' views that count. It's the children's voices that matter too.'

Teaching and the curriculum are good and result in pupils making good progress. Children get off to a strong start in the Reception Year because their needs are met well. Throughout the school, achievement is good. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6. All the different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and the very few at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, achieve equally well.

Although their progress is good, pupils do better in reading and science than in writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, for example, more pupils reach the higher level for their age in reading and science than in writing and mathematics. The school is already taking effective action to accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics and to give more challenge to the more capable pupils. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved since the last inspection and are now at the level expected. The school recognises that an important next step is to maximise the extent to which pupils are challenged in writing, mathematics and ICT across the full range of work they do in other subjects.

Pupils' independence in lessons has increased since the last inspection and is now good. Teachers give pupils good guidance about what they need to do to make more progress. The school knows that to become more independent as learners, pupils need to be increasingly involved in evaluating their learning and in identifying for themselves how they might improve their work.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work provided across the full range of subjects maximises opportunities to challenge pupils in writing, mathematics and ICT.
- Increase the involvement of pupils in evaluating their learning and in identifying how they might improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are above average. Children make good progress in the Reception Year. As a result, almost all reach the standards expected at the end of the school year, and a few exceed these standards. Pupils continue to do well as they move up from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading and writing and slightly above average in mathematics.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are significantly above average in English and a little above average in mathematics and science. These older pupils had slightly lower standards at the end of Year 2 than those now being attained at the end of Year 2. When pupils' progress is measured from the start of Year 3 to the end of Year 6, the most significant gains are made in reading and science. More pupils reach the higher level for their age in reading and science than in writing and mathematics. The school has successfully rectified the weaknesses found at the last inspection in pupils' attainment in ICT and design and technology.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As a result of pupils' exceptionally good behaviour, the school is a very calm and orderly environment. Pupils respect their friends' different backgrounds and beliefs and all groups of pupils mix well. Pupils' capacity to form positive relationships helps to prepare them well for their future lives. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school and wider community, for example, organising activities to raise funds for charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Pupils' tremendous enjoyment of school is evident in the many smiling faces about the school. Pupils particularly appreciate the wide range of activities, such as after-school clubs and visits out, as well as the approachability of staff. They are proud of their school. Even though pupils are enthusiastic about school, too many arrive a few minutes late in the mornings. Most pupils have good attendance, but the attendance rate fell last year as a result of a sickness bug.

Pupils have an exceptional awareness of how to keep fit and healthy and really appreciate the healthy school lunches. Their awareness of how to stay safe when out of school as well as in school is very good. They are very aware, for example, of issues to do with road safety.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn. The purpose of lessons is communicated to pupils so that they know what they are aiming to achieve. Teaching assistants and resources are well deployed. In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, for example, three members of staff worked well as a team to meet pupils' differing needs. Expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining and of their attitudes to learning are almost always appropriately high. In the Reception Year, there is good management of a variety of activities and classroom routines are well established.

Occasionally, adults focusing on particular groups do not ensure that the other pupils in the class get the right level of support or have activities that are suitable for independent work. When this happens, the pace of learning slows and not all pupils remain fully involved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good emphasis on English, mathematics and science helps pupils to progress well in these subjects. Even though pupils already make particularly strong gains in reading, the school is developing the provision for group reading to make progress in this area even better. Over the last year, focused action has been taken to improve pupils' writing and this is already proving effective. Rightly, much attention is currently being given to the development of pupils' skills in calculation and their understanding of mathematical vocabulary to raise standards in mathematics.

ICT provision has developed satisfactorily although progress has been hampered by limitations in resources, which are now being rectified. The school recognises that there is potential to challenge pupils more through opportunities to use and develop skills in writing, mathematics and ICT in other subjects.

Clubs and visits out, including residential visits, contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education also plays a strong part in this, as do links with partners such as the Church.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides an exceptional quality of personal care for its pupils, valuing each as an individual. The warm family atmosphere results in pupils growing in confidence and developing into extremely well-rounded young citizens. This begins when children enter the Reception Year where they are helped to settle in quickly and become valued members of the school community. As a result of the high quality personal care, pupils

feel safe at school and are confident that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise.

Academic guidance is good. Pupils say that the targets they are set and teachers' marking help them to improve their work. The school recognises that to make academic guidance as exceptionally good as the personal guidance, pupils need to be more involved in evaluating their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is improving rapidly. The commitment of all staff to developing the school is particularly impressive. Leadership and management are exceptionally effective at all levels. Not only do the headteacher and senior staff provide an extremely well focused direction for the school, but also other teaching staff recognise that they are accountable for the quality of education and pupils' progress.

Incisive self-evaluation is driving the school forward. Based on analysis of performance data and evaluation of teaching, the staff are already taking the necessary action to ensure that pupils' progress in writing and mathematics is as good as in reading and science.

Governance has improved well since the last inspection. Governors have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are strongly involved in helping the school to improve. They recognise that their involvement in analysing factors that contribute to the school's effectiveness could be even sharper. Given the recent progress and the high quality teamwork, the capacity for further improvement is outstanding.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping me when I visited your school. I enjoyed talking with you and finding out about your school. The School Council told me a lot about your views. They said that you think the school is good and you are right.

You are very sensible young people who get on well with each other. Your behaviour is outstanding, you work hard and really enjoy being at school. You have an exceptionally good understanding of the importance of staying fit and healthy. I am pleased that you like the healthy school lunches. I hear that the cook's lasagne is a real favourite.

You are making good progress with your school work because the teaching is good. The children in the Reception Year get off to a good start. You build on this well as you move up through the school.

The adults look after you extremely well and I know how much you appreciate this. You made me feel like a special friend too while I was in your school.

The school council told me that the school is improving a lot and they are right. This is because all the adults are working very well together to do their best for you.

There are two things that I have suggested to help the school to improve. To make sure that you all do as well as you possibly can, I have asked the teachers to do more to help you develop your writing, mathematics and ICT skills in the work you do in other subjects. I have also asked them to involve you more in identifying for yourselves how you can improve your work. I am sure that you would be good at doing this.

You can help by continuing to do your best. You can also help by making sure that you all arrive on time at the start of each morning.

Thank you once again for your help.