

St Malachy's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105532
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287251
Inspection date	26 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Graham Martin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Anthony Murray
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Miles
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Eggington Street Collyhurst Manchester M40 7RG
Telephone number	0161 2053496
Fax number	0161 2051649

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a school of average size situated in a disadvantaged area of Manchester. Over half of the pupils are White British but an increasing number are admitted from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Black African and Chinese. English is the second language of nearly a quarter of pupils. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is three times the national average. The school's work for its pupils and the community has been recognised with a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Silver Award ActiveMark, a Healthy Schools Gold award and a Leading Aspect Award for Teaching Strategies. It has also achieved the Inclusion Standard (Silver) and the NAACE* award for its work to provide effective opportunities for information and communication technology (ICT). The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both new in post this school year. Together, they have established a new leadership team during the current school year.

*NAACE: Originally the letters stood for 'National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education'. NAACE merged with a number of other organisations so it now has a broader base with teachers, lecturers, consultants, inspectors and other ICT leaders in its membership, in addition to advisors. Therefore, 'NAACE' is a general term used to describe all of the membership groups.

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 makes a real difference to pupils' lives because commitment to the well-being of all pupils is apparent in every aspect of its work. There are outstanding features in the quality of day-to-day care for pupils and in aspects of their personal and social development. Relationships are exceptionally good; pupils in this school feel very much part of a family. This is reflected in the way the school reaches out to the community by supporting the needs of all families, including those in vulnerable circumstances. Pupils speak highly of both the care the school provides and the opportunities they have for personal growth. The overwhelming majority of parents confirm their views. The headteacher's outstanding qualities of leadership bring about effective teamwork, enabling all staff to contribute well to the school's improvement. The school's accurate evaluation of its work reflects its vision to be a self-improving school and is seen in the good action taken to meet its targets. This gives the school good capacity to improve.

Pupils achieve well, frequently from a very low starting point. This is because the quality of teaching is good. Good use of information from rigorous assessments in English, mathematics, science and ICT help teachers match work well to pupils' needs. Consequently, they reach standards overall that are broadly average, and above average in mathematics and reading. Assessment of other subjects is not as well developed and so teaching is not as effectively adapted to meet pupils' needs. Overall, however, pupils receive a good curriculum. The school clearly recognises how promoting better communication skills among the youngest children will help it to improve writing. Good provision overall in the Foundation Stage, with outstanding provision for social and language development, reflects the school's determination to give its children a very good start. The good development of core skills in Nursery and Reception classes helps to make the work of teachers in Years 1 to 6 more effective because pupils are already becoming cooperative learners who are eager to achieve well. Outdoor learning opportunities for the youngest children meet their physical learning needs but are not used as fully to extend their numeracy and literacy skills. The quality of care, guidance and support is good with some outstanding features. Pupils in Year 6 say that they feel well prepared for moving to Key Stage 3, both academically and socially.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour is outstanding. They are exceptionally polite and courteous, showing a high level of interest in, and concern for, the well-being of others. Pupils are happy, enjoy school and celebrate the good fun they have in lessons. They value the very supportive relationships they enjoy with each other and with the adults who work with them. Their awareness of the school's rules and their response shows maturity in behaving responsibly and independently. They agree that their confidence in the adults around them helps them to trust someone if they are anxious or upset. Pupils know that bullying is wrong; they have a good understanding of how to deal with it if it should ever occur. Pupils are well aware of hazards that may affect their safety or well-being. In personal hygiene lessons they have a good knowledge of how exercise and a good diet helps them to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

This school provides good value for money. Good leadership and management give the school an accurate view of its own effectiveness. The school sustains its good impact by securing strong partnerships across the community. These help the school to achieve its vision and work towards its very high aspirations.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the good way staff match work to pupils' learning needs in English, mathematics, science and ICT is extended effectively to other subjects.
- Provide more extensive outdoor learning opportunities to develop further children's numeracy and literacy achievement in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well. The majority of children enter the school with skills well below those of most four-year-olds, especially in language, number, and personal and social development. The degree of careful attention that is devoted to planning learning that meets their needs means that all children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of learning. Some go on to achieve the goals expected by age five. Good progress continues in Key Stage 1 so that by the end of Year 2 pupils reach broadly average standards. In Years 3 to 6, continued emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing and number ensures good achievement for all pupils. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and reading and broadly average in writing and science. The current group of Year 6 pupils are on course to achieve the school's realistic but challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The personal development and well-being of pupils is good, with outstanding features in pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of learning. The evidence seen in lessons confirms pupils' claim that they thoroughly enjoy school and the learning opportunities it provides. Their spiritual and cultural development is good with outstanding features in their moral and social development. Attendance is above the national average, with good systems to check absences so that any problems can be tackled effectively. Overwhelmingly, parents value the school's work to promote their children's personal development. The school's stated mission is reflected in the ways that pupils respect and understand the feelings of others, caring for each other as part of their school family. Pupils take good responsibility for others too, through the school council and by becoming much valued peer mentors or play leaders. They relished teaching their parents and carers about healthy eating, making healthy snacks for them to sample on Healthy Eating Day. Although Year 6 pupils say they do not want to leave, they feel that their school gives them good opportunities to prepare for high school and beyond. They feel safe and value the school's work to help them understand the need for fair rules.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good because teachers have high expectations and pupils respond well to the challenges set for them. Throughout the school, pupils develop well as independent learners. Teachers demonstrate clearly how pupils should use their learning skills and they provide the resources needed to enable good achievement. Pupils use good

guidance from their teachers' comments to help them improve their work. The teaching and learning in reading and mathematics are particularly good; the school is working on improving the teaching of writing, which is not quite as effective. Teachers have a clear picture of pupils' strengths in English, mathematics, science and ICT and what the next steps are for them to achieve. Good planning ensures that the work set fits pupils' learning needs well. However, this picture is not as sharp in other subjects. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and work closely together to support them in all aspects of their learning. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons and thrive on their success. Homework is used well to promote good achievement. Pupils agree that the homework is useful and helps them to progress in their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good curriculum which meets the needs of pupils well and stimulates their enjoyment of learning. The range of learning activities provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very stimulating, providing good opportunities overall to develop personal and social skills and communication. While outdoor learning is planned well to meet all of the children's physical needs, it is not yet planned quite as effectively for developing their numeracy and language skills. The health, safety and social development of pupils is well supported through sport, exercise and the use of visitors and school trips that enrich learning opportunities. Pupils like the lunchtime and after-school clubs, and these are well attended. Good community partnerships increase opportunities for pupils, including sports competitions and art festivals. Pupils have welcomed the introduction of French and Spanish language clubs. Visitors and theme days bring added enrichment to the good provision for literacy and numeracy. ICT is used well to enhance pupils' learning, as evidenced by the school's achievement of a national award for this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care, guidance and support are a reflection of the school's commitment to its mission statement. The quality of day-to-day emotional care given to pupils is outstanding. The school's commitment to high quality care is reflected in how well each pupil is known to staff, so that all are treated with respect, as individuals, while at the same time learning their responsibility of care for each other. Pupils say that they trust the adults in school because they are treated with respect and fairness. This makes it easy to discuss their concerns with someone when they have a problem. They particularly value the 'Worry Boxes' provided where they can record a concern in confidence, knowing it will be acted on by an adult. Support for effective learning in English and mathematics is evident in the good use of assessment and target setting. The assessment of other subjects is used less well to adapt work to meet the full range of pupils' needs. The good guidance and support given to vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities adds great value to their learning. Pupils feel safe, secure and confident and they have a deep respect and trust for their teachers. Many parents report how well the school welcomes them. Procedures for child protection, for safeguarding pupils and for assessing risks are in place, and national guidelines for the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers are followed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership is good and the school is well managed. The headteacher has outstanding leadership skills, sharing her aspirations exceptionally well with the whole school community in her first year in post and reaffirming the school's values and vision. As a result, the school works well and is developing pace towards achieving its mission to celebrate the full potential of each individual. Outstanding partnerships with other schools and outside agencies help it to achieve this mission. Parents value the school's clear commitment to their children's needs which helps them to enjoy learning and achieve well. The school seeks parents' and pupils' views and values their ideas about what aspects of its work could be improved. It acts well on their suggestions; pupils were pleased that their ideas for making some areas of the building more interesting with murals were taken seriously. The headteacher's highly accurate evaluation of this school's effectiveness reflects her exceptionally good ability to analyse the impact of the school's work and what needs to be done to improve it. The recently established leadership team has identified the correct priorities for improvement and has set in place good action to achieve them, giving the school good capacity to improve. The headteacher develops the skills of staff exceptionally well, ensuring that all know the part they must play in improving the school and in checking its effectiveness. Governors contribute well to this process. Their clear understanding of the school's work and their support for the headteacher's vision and very high aspirations enables them to give the school good guidance and challenge.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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

Inspection of: St. Malachy's Catholic Primary School, Manchester, M40 7RG

First of all, thank you very much for the welcome that you gave me when I visited St. Malachy's Catholic Primary School. You were very friendly and I was very impressed with how polite and well behaved you are. I enjoyed my visit for the day and it did not take me long to realise that you enjoy learning very much. Thank you for all the discussions we had that helped me to find out how well your school works. You told me that you think you have a good school. I am sure that you will be pleased to know that I agree with you.

These are the things that most impressed me.

- You have excellent behaviour.
- You take part with great interest in the school's activities. This means that you learn well and try your best to reach the standards expected of you.
- You told me that your school cares for you well and always helps you to do your best, especially when you have any worries, upsets or concerns.
- The teachers are working well to make sure that you all learn as well as you should, even if sometimes you find learning difficult.

There are just two things that I would like your school to do better.

- I think the teachers could improve the way they check your learning in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.
- It would be good if the Nursery and Reception children could have some more ways of using the outdoor areas to improve their numeracy and literacy skills