

St Wilfrid's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105539
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287253
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Crouch

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Hood
Headteacher	Mr P McCarthy
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	St Wilfrid's Street Hulme Manchester M15 5BJ
Telephone number	0161 2263339
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a community of wide ethnic, religious, cultural and social diversity which experiences high levels of social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above the national average, as is the proportion for whom English is not their first language. The number of pupils eligible for a free school meal is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. The school is an accredited professional development school and holds the Healthy Schools Bronze award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. It has considerable strengths in the care and support it provides for its pupils and for the good quality of their personal development. However, although pupils develop well in the Foundation Stage, standards in English, mathematics and science could be higher for many pupils by the end of Year 6.

The school is highly valued by pupils and parents. When asked 'What is the best thing about the school?' the consistent response from pupils is 'the teachers'. Many comments from parents reflect this sentiment. This is a happy place which values and celebrates the cultural diversity pupils bring to the school. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and the high degree of racial harmony is a very noticeable feature of school life. One boy said, 'I am amazed at how many different nationalities there are in my class - and we all get on well together!'

Achievement is satisfactory overall. When children enter the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) their skills are well below the levels expected for their age. Good teaching and a lively, hands-on curriculum help children in the Nursery and Reception classes to achieve well. Despite this good progress, because of their well below average starting point few reach the national expectations by the time they start in Year 1. Pupils' achievement and progress are satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2 but by the end of Key Stage 2, standards in English, mathematics and science are below average overall. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the well targeted support they receive.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Weaknesses in the teaching of some key skills have restricted progress. The school has recognised this issue and is taking steps to tackle it. This is now leading to improvement although overall the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time remains satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. Nevertheless, there are strengths in the teaching. Teachers use a wide range of strategies to engage, manage and motivate pupils so that they enjoy learning, and pupils' good work is celebrated both in the classroom and in the marking of work. The school has well established procedures for monitoring academic progress, and pupils are aware of their learning targets. However, the school does not make the best use of this information to set sufficiently challenging targets that would enable pupils to achieve as highly as they should.

The curriculum is good. The school has made it a priority to ensure that all subjects have good provision, including providing Spanish teaching for all pupils in Year 6. Subject leaders have established useful connections between subjects through the use of themed weeks and other activities, to make learning more relevant and exciting. The curriculum is extended well by the many clubs and extra-curricular activities that pupils can access. Pupils appreciate the very good care and support they receive. They feel safe and secure and know that the staff have their best interests at heart. Their response is shown in their positive attitudes to learning. They talk confidently about how they eat healthily and take lots of exercise. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they are making satisfactory progress in developing the basic skills that they will need in their future life and the world of work. They enjoy taking on responsibilities, as demonstrated by the school council and the way in which older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger ones.

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features although they generally result in stronger outcomes for pupils' personal development than for their academic development.

The headteacher provides strong pastoral leadership which enables the school to fulfil some key aims. He has built a team of staff that work well together. Staff are encouraged to develop their professional skills, and show a willingness to take on responsibilities and lead initiatives to promote pupils' learning. The recently extended senior leadership team is very supportive of other staff and is developing a well focused approach to school improvement which is beginning to show results. The school's self-evaluation shows that it has a good view of its impact on pupils' personal development but it overestimates the effectiveness of its work in promoting pupils' academic progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Make better use of information on pupils' performance to set more challenging targets and improve pupils' progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage the early identification of individual needs and good teaching mean that children make good progress. Nevertheless, many do not reach the standards expected for their age in all aspects of learning and development by the time they start in Year 1. Since 2002 there has been some fluctuation in the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2. Overall standards have largely been below average, with pupils making satisfactory progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. School-based assessments indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 are below the national average in English and science and broadly in line with the national average in mathematics, and are making satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well being are good. Pupils say they enjoy school and find lessons interesting. This is reflected in their good attitudes and hard work in lessons. Attendance has improved gradually over the past three years. The school makes big efforts to raise the attendance level, for example by regularly rewarding classes for best weekly attendance, but despite this it remains below the national average. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and sometimes very good, for example when they are in assembly. Pupils are noticeably polite and well-mannered. They walk sensibly around the school and play well together at break times. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They demonstrate a very good knowledge and appreciation of different cultures and of their own origins and those of other ethnic groups at the school. The good quality of their singing around the school is uplifting. Pupils show good social skills but the below average skills they achieve in literacy and numeracy hinder their development for adult life. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and of how to stay safe. They talk excitedly about all the chances they get to exercise, including physical education lessons and 'lots of swimming and running'. They care well for others in the school, for example through being 'buddies' to young children in Nursery. They contribute to a range of charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to keep pupils' interest and maintain the pace of lessons. Teachers link work to pupils' own experience and make links between the different areas of learning to help pupils make sense of their own learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, a lack of consistency in the approach to teaching some key concepts, for example subtraction in mathematics, has contributed to progress in recent years being satisfactory rather than good. The school is making headway in addressing this issue. The marking of work is conscientious and is used well to encourage and motivate pupils. It is also used to inform pupils of the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve, but this good practice is not applied consistently to help pupils make quicker progress overall.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. It draws on and celebrates the cultural diversity in the school. Subject leaders ensure that schemes of work provide clear guidance on how to teach and assess pupils' work and that teaching resources are used well. Areas of the curriculum causing concern are identified and actions taken. This has led for example to improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT), and more recently, to a more consistent and effective approach to teaching mathematics. The curriculum is enriched through a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities which extend pupils' learning and improve their health and physical fitness. A programme of visiting speakers and visits to local art galleries, museums and workplaces helps to fire pupils' imaginations, broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. The school has established good links with the local authority and other organisations to improve learning. This has increased enjoyment in learning in music, enabled pupils to study Spanish, provided additional support for the teaching of reading and enabled pupils for whom English is an additional language to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. Pupils say that teachers are very supportive and that 'they're always available to give help'. They say that staff will always make time to listen to their concerns. Pupils report that there is very little bullying or falling out at school and any such incidents are dealt with well. They feel that the arrangements made to help them transfer to high school build their confidence for this event. The school has a significant proportion of pupils who are vulnerable in different ways. Specific, often individual, support programmes help these pupils feel secure and confident in lessons. Pupils learning English as an additional language receive good early support, whilst those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive equally good support which helps them achieve well. The work of the learning mentor is particularly successful in helping pupils who for one reason or another are having difficulties in school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are properly in place. Pupils know their individual and class targets but there is insufficient guidance on what they need to do to make good progress with these targets. The school has succeeded in

increasing parents' involvement in their children's learning by inviting them into the school at the beginning of the school day and encouraging them to monitor the target books their children bring home.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leadership team are acutely aware of the barriers to learning that many of their pupils face. They have created a caring, inclusive and supportive school in which pupils develop confidence and an enthusiasm for learning. The school succeeds well in promoting pupils' personal development but its record in promoting academic achievement is less strong. Many pupils could achieve better in English, mathematics and science. Performance data is not used sharply enough to set the targets that would drive pupils' progress forward more quickly. There is a common sense of purpose among staff, and they are proud of their pupils. Managers have clear roles and responsibilities and are developing the skills needed to raise standards within their areas of responsibility. The school works hard to enable all its pupils, whatever their skills, ethnicity or learning difficulties, to play an equal part in school life. The governing body has recently undergone a period of transition, with new members bringing a good range of skills to the school. Its members are very supportive and are keen to play an active part in its work. They have played a significant role, for instance, in planning new building work and in monitoring expenditure, but are still in the process of developing their role, particularly with regard to holding the school to account for its performance. The school gives satisfactory value for money, has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Annex A

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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I am writing on behalf of the two inspectors who came to visit your school recently. We would both like to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. We enjoyed talking with you and hearing all the things you like about your school. You are clearly very proud of it!

We think your school cares for you very well and gives you a satisfactory standard of education. Here are some of the things we think are particularly good about your school:

- the good care everyone takes of you and how hard all the staff and governors work to do their best for you
- your good behaviour and cheerfulness, and how well you all get on together
- the way your headteacher works so hard with lots of people and groups to help you in your education.

There are some important things we think could be better and so we have asked your headteacher to set you more challenging targets to help you achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science.

Of course, you also have an important part to play in helping your school to carry on improving. You can do this by continuing to be as positive about learning as you are now and keep trying to do your best. Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.