

St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105542
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287256
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Sibbering
Headteacher	Mrs L Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2003
School address	Calve Croft Road Peel Hall Wythenshawe Manchester M22 5EU
Telephone number	0161 4373890
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Roman Catholic school is situated in an area of mixed housing in Wythenshawe, on the outskirts of Manchester. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other ethnic and cultural heritages. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school currently provides a satisfactory education and gives satisfactory value for money. Its recent history has included a period of successive changes in the leadership team. Staffing and leadership are now stabilized, however, and the headteacher has initiated a planned improvement programme, with the support of the local authority. Some significant advances have been achieved this year, while other initiatives are at an early stage and have not yet made an impact. The school's leaders have a realistic understanding both of its strengths and of the areas in need of further development; their self-evaluation is accurate.

The reorganisation of provision for the youngest pupils has resulted in the creation of a Foundation Stage Unit, which provides excellent teaching through exciting activities, full of challenge and interest. This is having a positive impact on learning so that, although most pupils start Nursery with a low skills base, they make very good progress in most areas of early learning and develop confident, positive attitudes. The school has also addressed underachievement in Key Stage 1 through measures to improve pupils' writing skills and through focused work to raise the attainment of more able pupils. As a result, standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in English and mathematics have risen to match national expectations. Achievement overall is good. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average and this is the result of good teaching throughout the school and careful attention to the development of pupils' basic skills.

The school cares for its pupils well and promotes their personal development effectively by encouraging them to participate in a good range of activities and collaborate with each other. They are helped to be reflective about the needs of others and about how they can play a part in improving their school for the benefit of all. The school tracks pupils' progress conscientiously through regular assessment and some targets for improvement are set. Much remains to be done so that pupils can fully understand what they need to be aiming for in all areas of the curriculum and in their personal development. Pupils' work is marked regularly but, as marking is not linked to specific targets, it does not always give sufficient guidance as to what they need to do to improve.

Work has begun to develop monitoring systems to assure the quality of provision in the school, but this is at an early stage. The headteacher and external consultants evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, and subject leaders have begun to evaluate work samples and teaching plans. Further work remains to be done to involve all staff more fully in this process.

The school has, correctly, given priority over the last two years to addressing weaknesses in English and mathematics provision. There is now a need to review provision in all subjects to ensure that the curriculum is interesting and relevant to the pupils. A curriculum review has already begun, in acknowledgement of this need, but work is at a very early stage and its impact is not yet measurable. Consequently, in subjects other than English and mathematics, the curriculum does not yet fully meet the needs of all pupils.

Some improvements have been made to premises, including the outdoor areas. This is seen as the first phase of a long term programme of necessary refurbishment, but the benefits are appreciated by pupils and their parents, with the school council actively involved in contributing to the planning process.

The school has made satisfactory progress since its last inspection. Its capacity to make further improvements is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality and consistency of target setting, marking and academic guidance to give pupils clearer guidance to about what they need to do to make their work better.
- Develop the quality assurance role of subject leaders and coordinators.
- Review the design and continuity of the curriculum to ensure that, in all subjects, it is lively and stimulating and engages the interests of all pupils well.

A small proportion of 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: 2

Pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below expected levels for their age. They make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of excellent Foundation Stage provision, but a significant proportion of pupils do not fully achieve all of the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Progress in Key Stage 1 has been only satisfactory in recent years. However, initiatives introduced during the current school year have helped raise attainment so that standards at the end of Year 2 are now broadly average. This improvement is particularly evident in writing; the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels in all subjects has also risen. Attainment in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 2 has been consistently in line with national averages for the past five years and teacher assessments show that this is also the case in 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and their attainment is broadly in line with national averages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils relate well to each other and to the adults in school. They respond well to positive incentives, such as the lunchtime 'VIP table'; they adhere to the simple code of conduct well; and their attendance is good. They collaborate well in lessons and this is fostered and encouraged throughout the school. The school promotes clear moral values, set in the context of its mission statement. Pupils are prepared well for life in a multicultural society: assemblies and 'Super Learning Days' celebrate cultural diversity.. Pupils in Key Stage 2 learn Italian, reaching a good standard by Year 6. There are plentiful opportunities to be active in physical education and games lessons and in after-school sports clubs. Pupils learn how to swim and their overall fitness is enhanced by the provision of outdoor play equipment and new basketball courts. Pupils have a developing understanding of personal safety and healthy lifestyle issues. They are encouraged to eat and drink healthily and are starting to make use of the salad bar options at lunchtime. The confident and influential school council expresses pupil views very well. Pupils are active fundraisers and strong supporters of Catholic charities at home and abroad. They contribute well to the environment through recycling and a new allotment project.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils approach learning activities enthusiastically and enjoy their lessons. A skilled team in the Foundation Stage provides outstanding teaching. Rigorous assessment enables Foundation Stage staff to plan and deliver absorbing learning activities closely matched to the pupils' needs and pupils establish very positive attitudes to learning as a result. Teachers throughout the school are developing a range of strategies to engage pupils in learning. Strengths include the development of paired and collaborative work which increases pupils' self-confidence and supports improved participation in the lessons. Tasks are challenging and an improved range of teaching resources supports learning. Progress is regularly assessed which helps the school to identify and address underperformance in English and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported through planned activities matched to their abilities and through additional intervention strategies; teaching assistants have been trained to deliver these effectively. Relationships and behaviour in lessons are good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The rich curriculum in the Foundation Stage meets pupils' needs extremely well. In Key Stages 1 and 2, improvements in the English and mathematics curriculum over the last year have helped raise achievement in these subjects, particularly in writing in Key Stage 1. A coordinated approach to the other subjects has not been achieved, however, although improvements have been made within individual subjects. For example, investigative work is being developed to good effect in science and humanities in Key Stage 2 with useful links starting to be made between subjects and this adds to the pupils' interest and enjoyment. Information and communication technology is starting to be used to enhance teaching and learning in English and mathematics and, increasingly, in other subjects as well. The school is currently carrying out a full review of its curriculum. This is not yet complete, however, and the quality and continuity of the curriculum is not yet consistent across the classes in all subjects. There is a satisfactory range of extra activities, including sports and musical opportunities. Italian is taught in years 3 to 6 and this contributes well to pupils' cultural development. A programme of visits, including annual residential trips for older pupils, adds further enrichment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents value the care of staff who 'know the children so well' and help them become more mature. Systems to protect and safeguard pupils are in place. Parents feel they are well informed about their child's progress and have sufficient information to help them at home. Pupils know their group targets in English and are becoming aware of how they can achieve them but these are not sufficiently specific. Work has begun towards the process of setting targets for individual pupils, although this is at an early stage of development. The quality of marking and guidance given to pupils to improve their work is not consistent in all classes. It has been developed particularly well in Year 6, however, where it is having a positive impact on attainment. Pupils with additional learning needs are supported by a range of interventions which help them to

make satisfactory progress. The school manages induction to the Foundation Stage sensitively and there are good links with local high schools, providing support for smooth transition.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The capable headteacher has successfully united staff and governors in a commitment to her vision for taking the school forward. The school improvement plan provides clear direction and identifies appropriate actions to help raise standards and improve provision. Some initiatives have already made an important positive impact this year: the reorganisation of the Foundation Stage has achieved outstanding provision for the school's youngest pupils; the issue of underachievement in Key Stage 1 has been tackled and eliminated by strategic action. The governing body is closely involved in the school's daily life with individual governors working in partnership with subject leaders to review progress towards improvement goals. This gives governors a clear overview and a good understanding of the school's progress. Monitoring and evaluation are at an early stage of development, however, and further work remains to be done to establish robust quality assurance systems for all aspects of provision and to draw subject leaders more fully into the process. Work is also ongoing to develop target setting and marking as aids to raising standards, to improve the interest and enjoyment the curriculum provides, to update and improve resources and to refurbish the building.

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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?	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	1
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	3

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	2
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	3
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	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

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

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you're all getting along with your learning. We found that your school gives you a satisfactory education and that everyone is working very hard to make the school even better.

We were delighted to see the improvements that have been made in the Foundation Stage. Provision for the youngest children in the school is now outstanding and this gets them off to a great start. We were also pleased to see that standards are rising in Key Stage 1, especially in writing, and that the school is keeping up its good standards in Key Stage 2.

It was good to meet with the school council and to see how well you conduct your meetings. Good luck with the new allotment - we hope that you'll be able to enjoy eating some of the things you've grown when the right time comes.

We've asked Mrs Kelly and the staff to:

- improve the way your work is marked, so that it gives you clearer guidance on what you need to do to make your work better.
- look at how subject teaching is planned to see how your work can be made as interesting as possible.
- find more ways for subject leaders to make sure provision in every subject is as good as it can possibly be.

They have already started work on most of them.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by being happy learners.

With our very best wishes to you all.