



Our Lady's RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105543
Local Authority Manchester
Inspection number 287257
Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006
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 address	Whalley Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Whalley Range, Manchester
Age range of pupils	3–11		Lancashire M16 8AW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 2262767
Number on roll (school)	215	Fax number	0161 2264575
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ray Cawley
		Headteacher	Mrs C Page
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 2–3 October 2006	Inspection number 287257
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size Catholic primary school in Manchester. It serves a community with considerable socio-economic disadvantage. Most pupils come from minority ethnic groups, mainly Caribbean. Increasingly, pupils from eastern European countries are admitted who often start school with little or no English. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has been awarded the Bronze Healthy Schools standard.

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 its own cautious evaluation. It provides outstanding opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is seen in pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and personal relationships, which together lead to good achievement. Parents have faith in the school's good work and it provides good value for money.

The good teaching seen in most classes means that pupils achieve well. This leads to standards that are close to the national average in Year 2 and Year 6. This good achievement is a reflection on the school's encouraging ethos which, based on strong Christian principles, leads to positive attitudes to learning among the pupils. By providing a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and conditions in which good relationships flourish, together with good quality of care for the needs of all pupils, this school ensures that all pupils make good progress. However, in some lessons, assessments are not used well enough to help all pupils to know how they can achieve their best.

Pupils like their school. They know that the good care it gives them helps them to work hard and do their best. They trust their teachers to help them to settle any disagreements. This shows in the good relationships seen at all times. Pupils enjoy the learning opportunities available to them. They particularly welcome the way in which their own cultural heritage is celebrated alongside those of their friends from other backgrounds.

The school has taken steps to safeguard pupils by checking the suitability of all adults who work in the school. Pupils have a good awareness of risks and how to check that they are safe; they know that exercise and proper food help them to stay healthy and that a healthy lifestyle is a good thing to have.

Good leadership by the headteacher has brought the school through a difficult time when unavoidable changes in staffing caused some turbulence. Effective support from governors and firm decisions on the appointment and deployment of staff have improved stability, giving the school a better foundation for moving forward. Because some teachers are new to their role, their skills for checking the school's work are not fully developed and they do not yet consistently contribute to school improvement. So, overall, leadership and management are satisfactory at the present time. However, good links within the community and with other professionals, including those from the local authority, enable the school to check its work effectively and sustain its development, giving it good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that, in all lessons, all pupils are clear about how they can achieve their best.
- Develop the skills of staff with key responsibilities so that they can make an effective contribution to school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well from a starting point that is below average on entry to the Nursery. Results in national tests show that standards are close to the national average by the end of Year 6, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in Years 2 and 6 is below average. Achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science is good. Scrutiny of pupils' work from Years 1 to 6 confirms teachers' assessments that achievement over time is equally good for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Realistic but challenging targets are set. Generally, these targets are met and, where they are not, the school is able to explain the reasons, such as when test results are skewed after admitting extra pupils late into Key Stage 2, some of whom often have little or no English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Children make good progress in their personal and social development from day one. They learn daily school routines quickly, working and playing together well. Pupils are polite, well behaved and they enjoy school. This enjoyment is reflected in above average levels of attendance. Pupils feel safe and secure. Different groups play and work well together, well aware that bullying and racism will not be tolerated. The very few instances that occur are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents rightly praise the school's unequivocal response to racism. Pupils readily take on responsibilities, such as 'buddying' younger pupils. When consulted about issues that directly affect them they make a positive contribution to school life. While pupils feel that they have a say in important issues, there is no formal school council where they can discuss issues they raise themselves. Pupils contribute well to charities and take keen part in local events such as carnival. They increasingly adopt healthy lifestyles, being encouraged to eat healthily and exercise. The school is proud of its award for being a healthy school and is working towards achieving the next level.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The school's strong and effective Christian ethos means that teachers form good relationships with pupils. This in its turn means that pupils are keen to learn and forms the foundation for their good achievement. In most lessons, teachers set challenges for pupils that closely match their abilities. As a result, pupils achieve well. Recent changes to staffing mean that at present there are some variations from class to class in

the rate at which pupils learn but overall the impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good. Teachers have recently begun to assess pupils carefully and set learning goals that they understand how to achieve. While it is not yet used to best effect by some teachers, the school is working well to share its best practice so that teaching and learning improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. That for the Nursery and Reception classes is good. It enables children in these classes to experience a wide variety of learning opportunities, with a good focus on practical experience, for example, in the outdoor areas. For pupils in Years 1 to 6 a good range of other activities, such as visits to places of educational interest, enriches the curriculum. Good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils' learning is relevant. For example, as part of their work in history, pupils wrote and published a book about Olaudah Equiano, an African campaigner against slavery. This work is now shared with other local primary schools as a learning resource. However, while this is a good start in providing wider opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community, further opportunities have not yet been developed. Other good activities include a well supported range of sports and cultural activities, all of which promote enjoyment of school as well as encouraging healthy lifestyles. The curriculum alerts children to potential dangers to their well-being, for example, the serious risks of substance abuse.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care and support. However, the effective use of assessment to guide pupils is not consistent in all classes. This means that some pupils do not fully understand how they can achieve their targets. Procedures for ensuring the suitability of those working in the school are in place, as are child protection procedures. The school has considered the potential risks in any activities that involve pupils and works hard to reduce these risks. Adults in school create, and work in, a loving and caring Christian ethos. This is a key factor in ensuring that pupils lead healthy lifestyles, feel safe, enjoy school and achieve well. The school's good partnerships with a range of agencies, including the local authority, help to provide guidance to vulnerable pupils and support the achievement of all. A bilingual assistant gives help to the increasing number of pupils from eastern Europe admitted to the school, and the school has produced learning resources to support them. The school's open and successful links with parents and families benefits pupils and strengthens local community spirit.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher leads the school well, with effective support from the deputy headteacher and the governors, who are actively involved in the life of the school. Together, they have responded decisively to the outcomes of their thorough checking of school performance to improve provision in the Foundation Stage and deal with staffing challenges to improve stability. This means that the school is at a good point to move forward with its improvement, although staff with key responsibilities are still developing the skills to help with this work. Good partnerships help the school to review and check the quality of what it provides for pupils and their families. These partnerships support the school's improvement and help it to raise standards. The steps taken to improve provision and the outcomes for pupils, such as making better use of assessment to improve teaching and learning, are beginning to take effect, giving the school good capacity to improve.

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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	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	1
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	3
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?	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.

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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember when another Mr Martin and I visited your school at the beginning of October. You were very helpful while we were finding out how well your school is doing. It was a real pleasure to talk with you and find out how well you enjoy learning.

We think your school is a good one. We were particularly impressed by a number of things. Here are some of the things that make your school good.

- Very young children get a flying start in the Nursery and Reception classes. This means that they are ready to carry on learning well when they start Year 1.
- work of your teachers and other staff.
- You behave well, are polite and have good manners. You get along really well together and you enjoy school.
- Your teachers and other adults in school take good care of you, so you feel safe and well looked after.
- education.

We think there are two ways that would help to make your school even better.

- Your teachers should use what they know about your learning to plan work that helps each of you to learn as well as you can in every lesson.
- Everyone who is working to make the school better should be helped to do the best that they can.

You can help by carrying on listening to your teachers well and trying your best all the time, by joining the different activities the school offers you and making sure you continue enjoying school. Once again, thank you for all your help.