

St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105936
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	287368
Inspection dates	17–18 July 2007
Reporting inspector	David Halford

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev J Tallon
Headteacher	Ms G Evans
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2002
School address	Buckingham Road Cadishead Manchester M44 5HG
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school serves an area of social and economic disadvantage in Cadishead. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average, and few are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has received a Healthy Schools award, the silver Artsmark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and is an Investor in People. The school has suffered some significant disruption to staffing in recent years, including at leadership level. The staffing position has now stabilised.

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 provides a satisfactory standard of education overall. Pupils' personal development and well-being, the curriculum and the quality of care, support and guidance provided for them are all good. The headteacher, supported by a capable governing body, has a very clear understanding of the school's current position. They have acted swiftly in appointing new staff to key positions, with a clear programme for school improvement, although it is too soon to see the full impact of this work. Parents are very supportive of the school and its work.

Children start school with skills that are below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery class and achieve well. From Reception through to Year 6 progress is uneven and pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards which are broadly at the level expected by the end of Foundation Stage remain broadly average at the end of Year 6. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' performance is better in mathematics and science than it is in English, where standards should be higher. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although inconsistencies in teaching are the principal reason for pupils' uneven progress. Some groups of pupils, notably the higher attainers, are not achieving as well they can. The school does not yet use its good assessment information rigorously enough to improve pupils' progress.

The school has been successful in improving pupils' attendance to a satisfactory level. Behaviour is good. Pupils clearly enjoy being in school. They work well with each other, know how to keep healthy and safe and recognise that the school cares for them well. The school works effectively within its community, particularly in supporting activities linked to the church.

The curriculum is supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are supported well by pupils. It is broadened through the teaching of Spanish. The school has recently constructed its own garden area, which is providing a good addition to the school grounds and contributes to pupils' understanding of the importance of looking after the environment. It features prominently on the high quality website the school has developed. The school's overall provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors give good support and challenge to the school. They have given good guidance to the school during its recent difficulties. The recent appointment of a deputy headteacher and the establishment of a purposeful and dynamic senior leadership team have led to a real sense of urgency in bringing about improvement. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear grasp of what is needed to raise pupils' achievement. Significant new initiatives are now in place, but as yet it is too early to see the full impact of these developments in pupils' standards. However, the more stable staffing position and recent improvements in the quality of teaching, which in turn are helping to improve progress in lessons, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further. It provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English across the school.
- Remove inconsistencies in teaching to ensure that all pupils, especially the higher attainers, achieve as well as they can.

- Make more rigorous use of the assessment information to ensure that pupils' progress is consistently good.

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

Most children enter Nursery with levels of skill below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and personal and social development. They make good progress through Nursery and satisfactory progress through Reception so that by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage their skills are broadly at the level expected of them. Disruptions in staffing have led to uneven progress through the school. Overall, progress is satisfactory, although in some lessons it is now good due to improvements in the quality of teaching. By the end of Year 6 pupils' standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' test results over time indicate that standards are rather better in mathematics and science than they are in English. Standards in English fluctuate and overall are not as high as they should be. The school has worked hard in recent times to develop pupils' writing, but weaknesses remain in aspects of reading. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress because they are well supported in their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and they show confidence in and around the school. Their behaviour is good and is well managed by the staff. The school's 'Golden Rules' are well known and the pupils follow them well. They show positive attitudes in their work and they cooperate and collaborate well with each other. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils clearly enjoy school and participate in a wide range of activities with enthusiasm and vigour. They know they are safe and well cared for. They demonstrate a good understanding of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are aware why water is available to them throughout the day and they benefit from the physical activities associated with a wide range of after-school clubs. The school has good links with football and cricket clubs playing at the highest levels, and this promotes pupils' interest and enthusiasm. There are good links with the community, particularly with the local church, and links with the wider community include a recent visit from the Birmingham Royal Ballet. The school council is keen and enthusiastic. Its members are well informed about their school, take their responsibilities seriously and know that their decisions have an impact on the life of the school. They are developing skills which will serve them well in adult life. The development of the school garden is particularly good and contributes well to this aspect of the school's work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning has resulted in uneven progress in recent years. While there are clear signs of improvement, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make good progress throughout the school. In lessons where teaching is good, effective planning means that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and they are challenged to learn. Teachers' questioning is precise and pupils are given time to answer thoughtfully. Pupils' behaviour is managed well and they are supported effectively by experienced teaching assistants. As a result, pupils make good progress in these lessons. However, where the impact of teaching on learning is weaker, pupils of differing abilities undertake the same tasks and higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently and consistently. As a result, higher attainers do not make as much progress as they should and some lower-attaining pupils struggle with tasks which are too demanding.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned, broad and rich and it includes a modern foreign language. Pupils have had the opportunity to learn French and are currently learning Spanish. The school has improved its provision for ICT significantly since the last inspection and pupils' skills are developing well. The curriculum has a good impact on pupils' personal development and well-being, particularly through the implementation of a good personal, social and health education programme. The curriculum is supported well by visits and visitors. A wide range of activities is well documented on the school's website. These include newsletters from every class, short videos (including music, art, information and singing) of project work and poetry of high quality. Good quality residential visits are included for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and pupils look forward to them eagerly. Additionally, there is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well supported by the pupils. The school's Artsmark award is reflected in the good quality artwork which can be seen across the whole school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's pastoral care of its pupils is particularly good and pupils know that they are cared for well. Child protection and safeguarding policies and procedures are in place. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures are well documented. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress are good, with detailed individual records being kept. However, the information in these documents is not yet used rigorously enough to help pupils improve their work. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are recorded in good detail and this enables the school to develop effective strategies to help them with their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

School leadership has been subject to considerable changes in recent times. However, the school is now emerging successfully from this period. The headteacher has a very clear picture

of its current position and is taking firm steps to promote improvement. A newly appointed deputy headteacher and senior leadership team are working with great enthusiasm and skill to support the headteacher's vision. New staff have been appointed. The work undertaken to this point is good but has yet to impact fully on pupils' standards and school leaders recognise that more work is required to ensure that all pupils, but especially the higher attainers, achieve as well as they can. Governors are knowledgeable and have made good decisions to ensure that the school's progress over the period of instability has been managed as effectively as possible. School leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This, added to the purpose with which colleagues at all levels are approaching new developments, and the signs of improvement in teaching and learning, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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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	3
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?	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	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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

On behalf of the inspection team I want to thank you very much for your very warm welcome and for looking after us so well when we visited your school recently. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around school. We hope that those boys and girls on their residential visit to North Wales enjoyed their time away from home. We are sorry we missed you.

Your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education. We were impressed by some things about it. You behave well and work well together in lessons. Your school provides lots of exciting things for you to do. We liked your newly created garden and we think that your school website is very informative. We know that you feel safe in school and are learning how to keep yourselves healthy.

One of our tasks when we visited you was to decide what will help your school get even better. You can improve the standards of some of your work, especially in English, and we would like your teachers to make sure you all do as well as you can in all your lessons. In particular, we think that those boys and girls who are quick learners sometimes need tasks that will make them think a bit more. We know that your teachers keep good records of the progress you are making and we would like them to make more use of that information when they are planning lessons for you.

We send you our best wishes for the future, especially those boys and girls in Year 6 who are about to move to the high school. We hope you continue to enjoy your learning as much as you do at the moment.