



# St Monica's RC Primary School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 106356  
**Local Authority** Trafford  
**Inspection number** 287497  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jim Kidd

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Woodsend Road South
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Flixton, Urmston
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Manchester, Lancashire
			M41 6QB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7483353
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	334	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 9122909
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr T Dobson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Tyrrell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003		

---

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
3–11	6–7 December 2006	287497

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average Roman Catholic primary school serves a mainly residential area approximately seven miles from the centre of Manchester. Children's attainment on entry to the school is typical for their age. There are few pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups. St Monica's has a strong tradition in singing and the choir performed recently at the Imperial War Museum North as part of the Holocaust Memorial service.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In the words of parents, 'This is more than a school, it is a community which changes the lives of our sons and daughters and encourages them to be the best they can.' Teachers agree and add that they are very proud of their pupils and wish for them what they would wish for their own children. Indeed, St Monica's is a good school, with some outstanding features.

Excellent provision in the Foundation Stage gives children a very effective start to their school careers and ensures that they continue to enjoy learning. They respond very positively to good teaching, progress well in all years and reach consistently above average standards by the time they leave. Attainment in writing is above expectations, too, but is behind that in reading. Singing and drama are strong and children represent their school with skill and verve in the local community and beyond. Excellent nativity plays from pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 delighted their peers, parents, teachers and visitors during the inspection and demonstrated just how much and how quickly children gain in confidence and self-esteem during their time in school.

Personal development is outstanding: pupils are very caring and protective of each other and are delighted when their classmates succeed. Behaviour and engagement are impeccable and pupils readily take on a range of responsibilities to help the school move forward. The school council has a high reputation and the pupil play leaders make sure that no one is isolated at breaks and lunchtimes. Pupils speak confidently about how to eat healthily and are very well aware of the benefits of regular exercise.

The curriculum emphasises the importance of basic skills and the school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to enrich pupils' experiences. However, there is a need to extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum in order that pupils can research more for themselves. Care, support and guidance are outstanding and all groups of pupils, irrespective of their ability levels, are given every opportunity to succeed. In response, pupils demonstrate high levels of enjoyment with school life and their attendance is well above the national average as a result.

Good leadership and management and the inspirational leadership of the headteacher have resulted in a strong sense of teamwork amongst all staff. The senior management team, teachers and teaching assistants all speak with the same voice: they want to continue to make the school a better place for their pupils and for all connected with it. Subject coordinators have generally good views of their subjects but too few opportunities to observe lessons, in order to share the good practice through the school.

In St Monica's Roman Catholic Primary all members of the school community operate within a safe, supportive and stimulating environment. Parents, who are overwhelmingly positive about what the school offers their offspring, share its mission statement, 'The child is at the centre of everything we do.' The school has made good improvements since the previous inspection and the strengths in achievement, personal development,

care and leadership demonstrate that it is well placed to improve further. It provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the quality of pupils' narrative writing across the school.
- Extend the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool across the curriculum, in order that pupils can research more for themselves.
- Ensure that curriculum coordinators are more aware of good practice in their subjects by giving them more opportunities to observe teaching and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well through the school and reach above average standards by the time they leave. From broadly average standards on entry, children make rapid progress in the Foundation Stage and most reach or exceed the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been consistently above national averages for several years. The slight dip in results in science and mathematics in 2005 has been reversed, as a result of strong strategic planning, more emphasis on multiplication and a better balance between investigation and other aspects of the science curriculum. Pupils reached challenging targets in 2006, their performance matching that of previous years. The school recognises that standards in narrative writing continue to be behind those in reading. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do as well as others because their progress is tracked closely and they receive very sensitive support from their teachers and learning assistants. Pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve in line with other pupils.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' outstanding personal development contributes significantly to their learning in all areas of school life. Pupils develop into thoughtful, caring and mature young citizens. Behaviour is exemplary and attendance well above average. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and thought-provoking assemblies encourage pupils to reflect on both the material and spiritual sides of life. Pupils are passionate about fair play and justice. For example, when commenting on their awareness of different religions, remarks included, 'Beliefs of others are just as important as yours: you cannot object because it is important to them.' There are many opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for others, including the school council, house captains, play leaders and librarians.

Pupils make a valuable contribution to the local community by taking part in a wide range of activities including choir singing, collections for harvest mass and the annual senior citizens' party. They have mature attitudes towards healthy living, which belie their years and they thoroughly enjoy lunchtime 'wake up, shake up' which includes

dance and exercise routines. Their good progress in literacy and numeracy prepares them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

There are examples of outstanding practice in all key stages. Learners respond positively to the respectful treatment they receive and the high expectations teachers and teaching assistants have of what they can achieve. In an outstanding Year 5/6 numeracy lesson, for example, pupils rose with delight to the high levels of challenge and the increasingly difficult problems they were set. Similarly, pupils in a Year 1/2 lesson were beside themselves with joy when counting in pairs, odd and even numbers and in multiples of ten. As pupils say, 'Our teachers ask us difficult questions but also help us a lot.' Moreover, the talented team of teaching assistants provides focused support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In a small minority of lessons, however, there is too much teacher talk, pace drops and pupils begin to lose concentration as a result. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is excellent and children achieve very well because there is an ideal balance between learning through play and teacher-directed activities. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning from the very beginning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Children rapidly become confident learners as a result of the very well planned activities and exciting environment in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school the balance between learning basic skills and working creatively is effective. However, pupils have too few opportunities to use computers for personal research owing to internet access not being available in all classrooms. Innovative French lessons are valued highly by the pupils keen to greet visitors with 'Bonjour! Ca va?' at the beginning and 'Au revoir!' at the end of lessons. Teachers make sure that topics are covered in ways which best suit pupils' interests. Singing plays an important part in the life of the school and musical and drama activities do much to promote pupils' personal development, confidence and self-esteem. A good range of extra-curricular activities enriches learning and pupils speak highly, for example, of the trips to Manchester Museum and of the science and multi-cultural weeks. Good sports opportunities encourage pupils to recognise the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. This is reinforced by the personal and social education programme and the impressive links with outside providers.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Every child really does matter at St Monica's and the inclusion of each individual lies at the very heart of all the school tries to do. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are expertly supported in the classroom and teachers are always mindful of their targets for learning. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. There are many outstanding adult role models in the school upon which pupils base their relationships and behaviour. Personal development is particularly well monitored and any issues are addressed with the utmost care and sensitivity. Academic guidance is comprehensive and the school follows the exemplary practice of sending home pupils' future learning targets in English, mathematics, religious and personal education each half term.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The outstanding contribution of the dedicated headteacher is a strong feature of school leadership. He is supported well by a talented senior management team and by committed teaching and non-teaching staff who share his clear vision for how the school is to develop. The governing body is a knowledgeable yet critical friend. Evaluation of performance runs through every aspect of the school's work and is carried out with rigour, honesty and accuracy. The school has high expectations for its pupils, for its staff and for the quality of education it provides. Provision in English, mathematics and science and for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is monitored well and the school recognises that the next step is to develop further the skills of subject coordinators in the observation of teaching and learning.

There is a strong sense of community and of corporate purpose across the school and the mutually-supportive partnership between teachers and teaching assistants benefits all pupils. All staff contribute to the annual school improvement plan which identifies areas for action and takes a strategic approach towards achieving the challenging targets the school sets for itself, for example in the current drive to raise standards in writing. Parents are very supportive of what the school does for their children, commenting, 'We are very proud to be part of St Monica's.'

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
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**

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited St Monica's recently. You were very friendly to us and we enjoyed meeting and talking to you. We would like to share with you some of the good points about your school.

St Monica's is a good school and we know you are very proud of it. Your behaviour and attendance are excellent and you get on so well with your classmates, teachers and teaching assistants. Your teachers teach you well and you make good progress in your lessons. The school council makes very thoughtful suggestions as to how the school can improve even more and even managed to get funds for school from the local golf club! You have many opportunities to make links with the local community and you have a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. Your successes in sport, drama and singing are very good indeed and your work displayed on the corridors and in the classrooms is a joy to see! The adults in school care for you very well and your headteacher and all the other staff know how to make your school even better. The Christmas plays and rehearsals we saw during the two days were marvellous and everyone really enjoyed them.

We would now like you to work hard with your teachers to improve your standards in writing and we want your teachers to give you more chances to use computers. We would also like them to visit other classrooms more often to see how well you are all working.

Thank you once again for being so kind and friendly to us. We enjoyed watching you learn.