

# Our Lady of Grace RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 105345              |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Bury                |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 308836              |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 21–22 February 2008 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | David Halford       |

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

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|---|--|
| <b>Type of school</b>                     | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                    | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 3–11   |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed  |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |  |
| School                                    | 380  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair</b>                              |  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Miss P Jones   |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 7 June 2004  |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Highfield Road<br>Prestwich<br>Manchester<br>Lancashire<br>M25 3AS |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 0161 7967254   |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 0161 7963391   |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school serves an area of mixed housing on the outskirts of Manchester. Some pupils also travel from outside the area to attend. The proportions of pupils eligible for a free school meal, belonging to minority ethnic groups or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all below average. Recently the school has undergone a period of significant change in its senior staffing, which is not yet complete. The school has received a number of awards, including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, a Healthy Schools Award and the Activemark Sport Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Primary is a good school. It provides good value for money. Good leadership and management combined with good teaching and learning result in pupils' good achievement and in above average standards by the time they leave the school. The school cares for its pupils well and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. A particularly high return of parental questionnaires indicates overwhelming support for the school and these feelings are summed up in comments such as, 'Our Lady of Grace puts all children as number one. They feel safe, secure and more importantly 'happy'. They enjoy school and are always eager to return following breaks: they love school life!'

Most children enter the Nursery with skills which are broadly average. They make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage and good overall progress through Key Stages 1 and 2. Whilst this represents good overall achievement, the quality of pupils' writing is not yet up to the standard of their other work and higher attaining pupils are not consistently provided with sufficient challenge. Teachers' planning is good and lessons are managed effectively. Pupils are well supported in their learning by experienced and capable teaching assistants. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are exemplary and attendance is good. This is because they are well cared for and find lessons interesting and enjoyable. The school is developing good records of pupils' achievement and is beginning to use this information well to ensure that pupils sustain good rates of progress. Staff are working hard to ensure that the recently established systems, that show clearly what pupils' next steps in learning should be, are being applied consistently throughout the school. In addition to promoting pupils' basic skills, the good quality curriculum places a strong emphasis on the development of modern foreign languages, where very strong links with the neighbouring high school have been established, and pupils' skills in information and communication technology. The school serves its local community outstandingly well.

The headteacher, who is well established, has a clear vision of how to sustain the school's current strengths and build upon them for the future. She is well supported by a newly constituted senior leadership team which is not yet fully staffed. The newly established team has the confidence of a well-informed governing body. The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The inspection took place at a time of some change when a new appointment of Foundation Stage leader is imminent. Children start school with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although there are some weaknesses in their social, language and communication skills. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and Reception classes and enter Year 1 with the expected skills in all areas of learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good induction processes ensure that children settle happily into school routines and quickly gain independence, for example, by self-registering on entry to the classrooms. They are well cared for in a secure learning environment, show good attitudes to learning and behave well. Planning systems are satisfactory. Children enjoy the practical activities provided for them, but these are not always structured to cater for the different needs of children within the unit. However, good use is made of the outdoor area to provide extra learning experiences throughout the day. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's ability to link letters to sounds, but there are limited

opportunities to develop their writing skills. Assessment systems are satisfactory, with a new format for assessing Nursery children still at the planning stage. Leadership and management of the unit are currently satisfactory.

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

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing across the school.
- Ensure a consistent challenge for higher attaining pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills which are broadly average for their age. They make good overall progress through both key stages and achieve above average standards by the ages of seven and eleven. Within this overall picture of good achievement there are some variations. Pupils generally make better progress in reading than they do in writing, and recently they have made slower progress in mathematics than in previous years. Equally, the data indicates that higher attaining pupils do not always achieve as well as they can, particularly in their writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in their learning and are supported well. They regularly work at the same tasks as their peers.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good attendance and in the enthusiasm they show for all aspects of school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and very effectively supported by the Catholic ethos that underpins the school's work. Relationships are excellent: pupils feel they are valued and know there is always someone with whom to talk over any worries or concerns. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and welcoming. They show high levels of respect for themselves, the staff and the environment. Their attitudes to their work are outstanding and their behaviour is exemplary. They have a good awareness of staying safe, fit and healthy. There is a willingness to take on responsibilities with some older pupils coming into school early to fulfil these. They show care and consideration for younger pupils as they settle into school and organise games in their role as playground buddies. School councillors are proud of their input into decision making, especially with regard to the success of their recycling activities. Particularly strong links with the church and local community are exemplified in the wide range of musical events undertaken, for example, at venues in the city and in their fund-raising activities for charity. Pupils leave school as mature, confident individuals with outstanding personal skills and good academic skills which prepare them well for the future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn well because the quality of teaching is good. Where teaching is outstanding, pupils demonstrate high levels of enjoyment and a good understanding of how to improve their work, as seen in a lesson focused on the use of emotional language. Throughout the school pupils show positive attitudes to their work and cooperate well with each other. Planning is good overall. Teachers manage pupils well, sometimes in teaching spaces which are cramped, and

well briefed teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly so in group work. Teachers mark pupils' work well and, following recent professional development in this area, are increasingly giving pupils clear indications of how to improve their work. This is at an early stage of development but an encouraging level of consistency is emerging.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is well balanced and promotes the pupils' personal and academic development successfully. It makes effective links between subjects and places a good emphasis on developing pupils' basic numeracy and literacy skills. Planning builds well on pupils' earlier learning and ensures that those in parallel classes receive a similar entitlement. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visits that include a residential visit to Ampleforth College and many opportunities for musical development. All these add considerable interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. An appreciation of other cultures is promoted well and the teaching of modern foreign languages is encouraged with French and Spanish. Strongly established links with the high school to which pupils progress also offer pupils good opportunities to take part in a wide range of sporting activities, including gymnastics and fencing.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are looked after well. The school's provision is particularly strong in the care it offers to the pupils. They know this and respond to it very well. It promotes confidence in their learning and adds significantly to the high quality of the pupils' personal well-being. Systems for safeguarding pupils and promoting health and safety are in place and effective use is made of outside agencies to provide specialist support when required. Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils with additional needs are good and are managed well. Induction and transfer systems are good. The tracking of pupils' progress is thorough and is developing well. It informs pupils clearly of what they have done well and is beginning to show them what they need to do next to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is well established and experienced, and is leading the school confidently through a period of significant change following the retirement of some senior and influential members of staff. The newly emerging leadership team is working purposefully to promote improvement. The school has an accurate picture of its current position and a good plan for identifying areas for development. It has already started to consider ways in which pupils may be involved more actively in assessing their own work. There are outstanding links with outside agencies to promote pupils' well-being and the school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents. The staff are deployed effectively to promote high quality personal and academic development of the pupils and the governors have a good knowledge of the school. They support and challenge it well.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

### 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   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection  | Yes |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?   | 1   |
| The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage   | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements   | 2   |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve?  | 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

|   |   |
|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?                                  | 1 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 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

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 2 |

<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.



## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards  | 2   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 2   |
| 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  | 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**

Inspection of Our Lady of Grace Roman Catholic Primary School, Manchester, M25 3AS

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you very much for your very warm welcome and for looking after us so well. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around school. Particular thanks should go to members of the school council who helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much.

We do not think you will be surprised to hear that we judge that Our Lady of Grace Primary School is a good school. This is because it cares for your personal development so well, helps you to make good progress in your work and enables you to enjoy yourselves very much. We particularly like the way you get on with each other and were impressed at how many of your parents wrote to us to indicate how much they like your school. I shall remember particularly well joining with so many of you in your church service for Lent.

One of our jobs is to look for things which will make your school even better and help you more with your work. We think that although many of you do well in your work in English, you could be helped to improve the quality of your writing. We also want your teachers to ensure that those boys and girls who find their lessons less stretching are always given work to really make them think. So we have asked your headteacher and teachers to see if they can make that more consistent in school.

We send you all our best wishes for the future. We hope you continue to enjoy your learning as much as you do at the moment.