

St Chad's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105525
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308880
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2008
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 aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Mahoney
Headteacher	Mr John Travis
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
School address	Blamfield Street Cheetham Manchester M8 0SP
Telephone number	0161 205 6965
Fax number	0161 205 6529

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized Catholic primary school serves an area of some economic and social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is also well above average and a significant number of these pupils are in the early stages of learning English. There is also a much higher than average level of pupils joining and leaving the school other than at the usual times. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. There have been significant changes in staffing in recent times and there are further developments in the senior leadership planned for next September. The school holds Healthy School status and is an Eco School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Chad's Roman Catholic Primary is a satisfactory school with some good features. It provides satisfactory value for money. The school cares for its pupils well. This means they feel safe in school and contributes to their good personal development and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Pupils' standards, particularly in English and mathematics, are below average but nevertheless their overall achievement is satisfactory, given pupils very low starting points. The great majority of children entering the Nursery have levels of skills and development that are well below those expected for their age. Despite good teaching, pupils make overall satisfactory rather than good progress because a very high proportion of pupils enter and leave the school other than at the usual times. Pupils who remain in the school throughout their primary education do, however, make good progress. Teachers' marking does not consistently guide pupils on the next steps in their learning and how to improve their work.

Parents speak highly of the school and their positive feelings are summed up in comments such as, 'The school has improved on many levels; it is dedicated to realising the vision of a new St Chad's helping children to reach for the stars!'

Teachers' planning is good and lessons are managed effectively. Pupils receive a satisfactory curriculum and are well supported in their learning by experienced and capable teaching assistants. The school works hard to promote pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and satisfactory attendance. Good systems are now established to track the progress of individual pupils. This is helping teachers and school leaders to identify pupils who need extra help with their learning and to take swift action to support them.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has a clear vision of how to sustain the school's current strengths and build upon them for the future. He has been well supported by the local authority over the last year. He is also being 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 satisfactory progress since the last inspection, particularly in its developments with information and communication technology (ICT) and has a good capacity to improve further. This is also demonstrated by the effective self-evaluation and good progress made in developing the high quality tracking procedures which have been introduced over the current school year.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

From their very low starting points most children make satisfactory progress overall through the Nursery and Reception years; particularly good progress, however, in social, language and communication skills. The vast majority of children leave Reception with skills that remain below expectations for their age. Thorough induction procedures ensure that children quickly settle into school routines and begin to gain effective levels of independence. They are well cared for in a secure learning environment, show good attitudes to learning and behave well. Planning systems are satisfactory and children clearly enjoy the activities provided for them. Currently assessment systems through this stage of learning are satisfactory, as is leadership and management. The outdoor learning provision is better for children in the Nursery than it is for Reception children. This leads to inconsistencies in the overall outdoor provision for

children in the Foundation Stage and means that Reception children have fewer opportunities to develop their learning outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Improve the outdoor learning provision for children in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking so that pupils know what to do next to improve their work.

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

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are below those expected for their age. Throughout their time in school, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress although standards remain below average by the end of Year 6. The high numbers of pupils leaving the school and joining throughout the infant and junior years has an adverse impact on the standards for this group of pupils although their achievement is satisfactory overall. The school has developed robust systems for interpreting its data and analysing trends in pupils' progress accurately. These records show that most pupils who stay in school through both key stages generally make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and are frequently enabled to work effectively alongside their peers. The majority make satisfactory progress. Despite this overall satisfactory picture of achievement there is a need to improve pupils' standards, particularly in English and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the enthusiasm they show for all aspects of school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because it is effectively and sensitively supported by the aims that underpin the school's work. Relationships are good; pupils feel they are valued and know there is always someone with whom to talk over any worries or concerns. They are polite, friendly and welcoming. Pupils show good levels of respect for themselves, the staff and the environment. Their attitudes to work and behaviour are good. They have a good awareness of staying safe, fit and healthy. Older pupils show care and consideration for younger pupils as they settle into school. School councillors are proud of their input into decision making. Strong links with the church and local community are exemplified in the activities pupils undertake and in their fundraising activities for charity. Attendance remains satisfactory despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve it. These include a highly organised and popular 'walking bus', which is well supported.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

While the quality of teaching is good, it only results in pupils making satisfactory progress because many do not stay at the school long. Much work has been undertaken over the last

year to improve the quality of teaching and assess its impact on pupils' learning. This has contributed well to pupils' overall progress. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and teaching assistants provide strong support and are valued by the school. Planning is good overall. All staff manage pupils well, sometimes in teaching spaces that are cramped. Some outstanding teaching was seen, and in these lessons there is an air of excitement as pupils are eager to gain new knowledge and skills. Some teachers mark pupils' work well and, following recent professional development, teachers are increasingly giving pupils clear indications of how to improve their work. This is not, however, a consistent picture and pupils are not always sure what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall as it is currently still being reviewed and further development is awaited. It is broad and balanced and the school's curriculum plan shows that all areas are covered satisfactorily. The Key Stage 1 curriculum, which is topic based, has been reviewed. The new procedures implemented from the start of the current school year have already had a positive impact on engaging pupils in their learning. Plans are in place to review the Key Stage 2 provision from the start of the next school year. Specialist teaching is used well in the designated areas of music and religious education. The curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of clubs and activities. They include a good range of sports, performing arts, science and the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language. These are regularly held and well supported. Additionally, pupils speak purposefully about the visits and visitors that are accommodated in particular year groups. Some of the visits include residential experiences, which add much to the pupils' enjoyment and good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are looked after well. The school's provision is particularly strong in the care it offers to pupils. They know this and respond to it well. It promotes confidence in their learning and adds significantly to the good quality of pupils' personal well-being. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and promoting health and safety are in place and statutory requirements are met. Effective use is made of outside agencies to provide specialist support when required. Systems for monitoring and supporting pupils with additional needs are good, as are those for induction and transfer. The tracking of pupils' individual progress is very thorough. This is a very important area of the school's provision given the high levels of pupils starting and leaving the school other than at usual times.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Good leadership by the headteacher has resulted in some rapid developments over the last school year. The appointment of a new assistant headteacher, who has established high quality tracking procedures, and the support of senior colleagues has engendered a purposeful drive for improvement. Even though the senior leadership team is not yet complete, as a newly appointed member does not take up the post until later in the year, the school has an accurate and realistic picture of its current position. This is well known by the staff and by a knowledgeable governing body that carries

out its responsibilities well and, in its turn, is eager for improvement. It can see that recent changes are bringing about clear and encouraging developments. School leaders have taken steps to promote satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, although some changes have been made very recently. The school works well in partnership with others to promote pupils' academic and personal development.

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Annex A

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?	3
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Chad's RC Primary School, Cheetham, M8 0SP

We really enjoyed our recent inspection of 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 the school. Particular thanks should go to all the children who gave up their lunchtime to speak with us and helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much. We think that your school is satisfactory and that it does some things well.

We know that your school cares for you well and makes sure that you stay safe, healthy and enjoy your time in school. We also saw good teaching in your school, which helps you with your learning. Your school works well with many other people to ensure your care and support. All the adults who support you in your lessons impressed us. Overall, we think you all try very hard to make your school community a happy and secure place.

We also hope that our visit will help your school to become even better. We are asking the headteacher, governors and teachers to do three things.

- To help you to raise your standards in literacy and numeracy.
- That when your teachers mark your work, they are more consistent in telling you what you need to do next to make your work better.
- To provide better facilities for outdoor play and learning for children in the Nursery and Reception Years.

You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and attending school regularly unless you are ill.

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