

St John Bosco RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105530
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308881
Inspection date	21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Danny Fleming
Headteacher	Mrs Marie Woodward
Date of previous school inspection	11 April 2005
School address	Hall Moss Road Blackley Manchester Lancashire M9 7AT
Telephone number	161 7407094
Fax number	161 7956843

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: how more able pupils are challenged in mathematics, the monitoring of learning and teaching, and the quality of care, guidance and support. This was done by gathering evidence from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors, and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. It serves an area of considerable social and economic deprivation which is undergoing a major programme of regeneration. More than twice the national average of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is similar to that found nationally. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds both the Activemark and Healthy Schools Bronze awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Within this good school there is a happy, harmonious community where pupils receive outstanding care, support and guidance. Good leadership and effective teamwork by staff and governors ensure each pupil gains the academic and social skills needed for future life. The great majority of parents are very pleased with the school, many commenting that it really helps their children grow in confidence.

Achievement is good. Children start school with skills well below those typically seen at their age, especially in speech and language. They progress well in the Foundation Stage but when they join Year 1, standards are still below those expected for their age. Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 2 they reach standards that are below the national average. However, standards in writing are well below national averages, reflecting pupils' limited spoken skills. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science which represents good progress from pupils' starting points. In 2007, pupils met challenging targets. They made particularly strong progress in science where every pupil gained the expected Level 4 and over half reached the higher Level 5. Few pupils reached the higher level in mathematics in 2007. Actions to remedy this are proving successful and as a result, a greater proportion of pupils are now on course to reach the higher level. Standards in writing do not yet match those in reading because many pupils find it hard to express their ideas and use a limited range of words in their writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and included in all activities. This ensures they make good progress.

Personal development is good. Pupils love school and are always friendly, helpful and polite. They care about their health and eagerly take part in the sports activities on offer. They say they feel safe and bullying is not an issue, and trust staff to help with any problems. Fundraising, singing at the hospital and participating in local festivals and events are thoroughly enjoyed. Pupils spoke proudly about their work as playground buddies and water monitors. School councillors are keen to make school better for their classmates; they are currently working to get more playground equipment. Very close links with the church and parish complement the excellent provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show genuine consideration for the needs of others and the environment. A wide range of imaginative partnerships with other schools and organisations and educational visits extend pupils' cultural and global awareness most effectively. Year 6 pupils enjoy regular contact with a school in Germany via video-conferencing, the choir sings in church and participated in 'The Big Sing' at the Bridgewater Hall. Every effort is made to improve attendance to average.

Good teaching means pupils really enjoy learning and make good progress. One pupil spoke for many saying, 'Teachers always make learning fun.' Good relationships based on mutual trust ensure pupils behave well and work hard so lessons proceed smoothly. Well deployed teaching assistants provide skilled support in lessons and for individual pupils including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most lessons move along at a good pace, so pupils concentrate on their tasks. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to develop the thinking and speaking skills which underpin writing.

The good curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Priority is given to the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). Plans to make links between subjects, so that learning is even more meaningful and enjoyable,

are at an early stage of development. This sometimes restricts pupils' opportunities to practise their basic skills. A good programme of personal and social development enables pupils to consider values and emotions so they mature into thoughtful, considerate individuals. Excellent enrichment provides a really broad range of activities that pupils would not otherwise experience. For example, older pupils are involved in a film animation project using local ICT facilities. The very wide range of after-school clubs are very popular, especially sports and music.

Outstanding care, guidance and support are enhanced by strong relationships between home and school. Many parents commented that teachers were helpful and approachable. All current safeguarding requirements are in place. The school makes very good use of all external welfare and support agencies to benefit pupils. Excellent systems for tracking pupils' academic progress give staff a very clear picture of individual progress and where to direct extra help. Pupils know their targets and say teachers show them how to improve their work.

The leadership team, governors and staff share a clear vision for school improvement. The school knows itself well so plans for improvement are well focused and supported by prudent budget management. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have risen, especially in science, because learning and teaching is carefully monitored. The governors are actively involved in school life and make good use of their local knowledge to hold the school to account. The school has a secure foundation and good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. When children enter the Foundation Stage, most have very limited communication skills. Parents appreciate the warm 'family' atmosphere and speak highly of the way staff care for each child. Consequently, children feel safe, secure and are eager to learn. Teachers provide many practical activities that capture children's natural curiosity. They give children many opportunities to talk about their activities to increase their speaking and listening skills and practise letter sounds. Reception class children 'sound out' new words but many find it hard to remember the words they often meet. Children explore and investigate and make good progress. They love learning in the attractive outdoor area and enthusiastically scramble up the climbing frame, ride the bikes around the roadway and 'paint' the walls with large brushes and lots of water. Staff keep a very close watch on children's academic and social progress; several parents commented on how well their child has progressed in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although they have made good progress, most children are working just below the nationally expected levels at the end of the Foundation Stage.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' speaking skills in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 so that pupils organise their ideas more effectively and use a wider range of words in their writing.
- Make better links between subjects in order to ensure that pupils have more opportunities to practise their basic skills.

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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?	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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 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	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	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?	1

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?	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	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	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 St John Bosco RC Primary School, Manchester, M9 7AT

This letter is to thank you for making my visit to your school so enjoyable. You all greeted me with a smile, and everyone was very friendly, polite and helpful. I was very impressed by the choir's lovely singing. Many of you told me how much you enjoy all the sports and clubs and it was good to see you playing happily on the school field. Your parents are pleased because you really enjoy school. You have lots of super things to do such as visits, music, video conferences and sports clubs. Not many children of your age learn two foreign languages! I really enjoyed seeing Year 6 talking to the children from another local school in German.

You go to a good school. You make good progress and by the time you leave you reach similar standards to children in other schools. This is because you work hard and you have good teachers who give you interesting things to do in and out of class. The school cares for you all extremely well so you feel safe and concentrate in your lessons.

I was pleased to see how well you behave and try to care for others and look after your health. The school councillors told me how they try to make school better for everyone, and I saw the playground buddies doing a good job working hard to tidy up all the equipment outside.

Your school has good leaders who are helped by good staff and governors. They are always looking for ways to make the school better. I have asked your teachers to help you to develop your speaking skills so that you will find it easier to write down your ideas and can use a wide range of words in your writing. The staff have started making changes to the way you study different subjects. I have asked them to continue to work on making better links between subjects so you will find your lessons even more interesting and you will have more opportunities to practise your basic skills.