

St Charles RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105955
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	324303
Inspection date	19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Geoffrey Yates

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	230
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Damien Morley
Headteacher	Mr Peter O'Brien
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Emlyn Street (off Moorside Road) Swinton Manchester M27 9PD
Telephone number	0161 7944536
Fax number	0161 7285162

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects of its work: how well pupils achieve, standards in English, the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well pupils are involved in their own learning. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF); nationally published pupil performance data; lesson observations; scrutiny of pupils' work books; additional documentation provided by the school and discussions with the headteacher, chair of governors and pupils.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that most of the school's own assessments, as given in its SEF, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report. However, the school underestimates pupils' personal development.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery and Reception class. The school serves an area just outside the town centre of Swinton. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A below average number of pupils is entitled to free school meals. There is a small proportion of pupils from minority heritages but none at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The headteacher took up his post in January 2009. The school has many awards including the Activemark for its provision in physical education and school sport.

Extended provision is available for pupils before and after school. That provision was inspected separately, at the same time as the school inspection, and receives a separately written report.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features in pupils' personal development and well-being. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate. Parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the initiatives put in place by the newly appointed headteacher to improve the quality of what the school provides. In their very positive response to the inspection questionnaire, a typical comment was, 'The new headteacher has made some fantastic improvements. I feel more a part of the school. The school is welcoming to pupils and parents alike.' Pupils' personal development is outstanding as are levels of care and concern for the welfare of the whole-school community. Academic guidance is less effective in guiding learning. There are examples of marking that provide pupils with clear and detailed guidance on how to improve, but marking is not used consistently well throughout the school. There is a very strong sense of community spirit and all pupils clearly greatly enjoy coming to school as shown by their above average attendance.

Standards are above average and pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who benefit from activities which are well matched to meet their individual learning needs. Children's skills on entry to Year 1 are within the expected range. They progress well and by the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are just above average. They continue to build on this good progress through Key Stage 2 and leave at the end of Year 6 having attained standards that are securely above average in English, mathematics and science. Currently, pupils in Year 6 are on course to maintain above average standards, with a higher proportion of pupils expected to reach the higher levels in writing than in the previous year.

As a result of the emphasis given throughout the curriculum to the development of healthy lifestyles, pupils have a well-developed understanding of the importance of a balanced diet. Many opportunities are provided in lessons and outside the school day for pupils to take part in regular exercise and their participation rates are high. Pupils not only feel very safe at school because of the very high quality pastoral care, but they also know how to stay safe both in school and outside. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and meet current government requirements. Pupils contribute a great deal to the school. They undertake responsibilities very diligently, such as those of school councillors. Pupils are highly aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and raise funds for charities. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school, contributing much to the school's calm and purposeful atmosphere. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are very good. The school promotes community cohesion well. It works very closely with the local community and pupils are given a good insight into life away from their immediate area.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan work to hold their interest in lessons. Questioning skills are generally good and pupils are keen to respond. There are some good examples of pupils extending their learning by evaluating their own and others' work. Good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. A good curriculum is increasingly focused on the acquisition of key skills and their use across the curriculum, as witnessed in the well-planned 'learning journey' topics which pupils undertake. The leadership team is reviewing the curriculum in order to establish even more effective links between subjects to help pupils to connect aspects of their learning more coherently. The new

headteacher has been proactive in increasing the number and range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils.

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. A new leadership team has been established with a good range of expertise and a detailed school improvement plan is in place. Parents are pleased with the quality and extent of home school links. The school's assessment systems have been refined and improvements have been made to the building, with more improvements planned. Staff have a strong sense of commitment to providing the best possible education for their pupils and to promoting equality of opportunity. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes because the area is led well and teaching is of good quality, and firmly focused on children's needs. Children settle well into school because of the high quality care and guidance they receive and the close attention given to their individual welfare. Their personal development is outstanding because of the high priority given to this aspect of children's development. Good use is made of the outside area to support learning. For example, children enjoy the challenge of searching for mini-beasts. However, there are difficulties of access from the Reception classroom, which places some limits on the opportunities for these children to extend their learning outdoors. Strong emphasis is placed on the development of communication, language and literacy skills and on pupils' personal and social development. Children are given good opportunities to take responsibility and to develop independence, for example, by tidying up at the end of an activity without being told to do so. By the end of Reception, the majority of pupils are working well within the levels expected for their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure consistency in the quality of marking in order to inform all pupils clearly of their performance and of how they can reach even higher standards.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St Charles RC Primary School, Manchester, M27 9PD

Thank you for helping my colleague and me during the inspection. You will not be surprised to know that we think your school is a good one. We enjoyed watching you learn and talking to you. It was a pleasure to meet pupils who kindly gave up their lunchtime to answer questions. I was really pleased to see how sensible you all are, especially during wet playtimes. It was an absolute delight to see the children in Year 6 using their thinking skills well to solve a mathematical problem. I am sorry I did not hear the school's musicians play. The list below shows some of the many things we liked about your school.

- You feel safe, work hard and achieve well throughout the school. The standards you reach are above average.
- You behave exceptionally well, are keen to offer your opinions and also to listen to the views of others.
- You like your teachers and other members of staff, and the way they make learning interesting.
- Your parents are pleased with the start made by your headteacher to improve further what the school has to offer.

I have asked your school to look at one thing to make your work even better.

- To add written comments, when appropriate, in the marking of your work to show you what you need to do to improve.