

St Luke's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105966
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	324306
Inspection dates	4–5 February 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)	324
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	Fr John Williams
Headteacher	Mr Paul Jameson
Date of previous school inspection	3 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Swinton Park Road Salford Lancashire M6 7WR
Telephone number	0161 736 6874
Fax number	0161 921 1995

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of an above average size compared to primary schools nationally. It serves an area of mostly private housing situated 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 receive free school meals. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage and a new leader has just been appointed. The school has achieved the Healthy Eating Award. At the time of the inspection a major building project was taking place.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' personal development and the pastoral care the school provides are both of a good quality. The school's strong ethos based on its religious foundation ensures that pupils feel valued. They say they feel very safe and get all the help they need. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Parents are highly supportive of the school and it is held in very high regard within the community. A typical comment is, 'The school is very inclusive. The headteacher and the staff really care about all aspects of children's development. They happily come to school.'

Overall pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. This is partly because information about pupils' progress is not used effectively in some classes which results in progress that is uneven. Provision is good and children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils enter Year 1 with skills that are above average. Previously, this was not the case and so, despite satisfactory progress, in 2008, standards in Year 2 were below average. However, inspection evidence shows that current standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should given their starting points. Standards by Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science and have been for a number of years.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There are examples of teaching and learning being of at least good quality. In these classes pupils are consistently challenged to achieve their best and respond accordingly. Classrooms are managed well throughout the school and a good feature in all classes is the high quality of relationships between staff and pupils. Support provided by teaching assistants, ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. Where teaching and learning is not as strong, the pace of lessons is slow and assessment information is not used well to set work that is challenging, especially for the more able pupils.

Pupils enjoy their lessons, behave well both in class and outdoors. Pupils talk sensibly about the importance of healthy eating and are very aware of how to maintain their own safety and protect that of others. Parents confirm what pupils say with regard to pupils feeling safe in school. The school's safeguarding procedures are robust and meet current government requirements. Pupils are given many opportunities to take on responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils give up part of their lunchtime break to help younger pupils develop their reading skills (reading buddies). The teacher supervising that activity rightly remarked, 'the pupils don't need me they know how to help younger pupils and do it very well'. While the curriculum is satisfactory with good provision for pupils' personal development, it is not always modified in all classes to cater for the needs of higher attainers, especially in Years 1 and 2. However, this is not the case in Years 5 and 6. Pupils in these classes produce written work of outstanding quality, linked to topic work.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership, supported by the senior leadership team. Subject leaders are developing their role but are only just beginning to influence standards. The school is aware that information about pupils' progress is not used effectively in all classes. The school's finances are managed exceedingly well by the school's business manager. Governors are very supportive of the school. The current building project demonstrates their commitment to improve the environment for learning. The

school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because of the clear direction by the headteacher and the willingness of staff to embrace change. It provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are happy, settled and enjoy coming to school and their parents are overwhelmingly supportive. There is real strength in the level of care and focus on pupils' welfare, which are both of a very high quality. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge, which are typical for the age group. Good use is made of assessment information with the 'look, listen and note' procedures used well. Children make good progress and, as a result, achieve skills in all areas of learning that are above those expected by the time they are ready to join Year 1. Teaching and learning are good. Strengths of the teaching are the ways that questioning really challenges children's thinking and a particular strength in the Nursery is in the way children are encouraged to be independent thinkers. There is access to a safe outside area but the building work ongoing at the time of the inspection placed restrictions on its use. The outside area is seen as a valuable resource where learning can take place. Although the Early Years Foundation Stage has lacked a manager 'in name' until recently, the achievement of the children has not been affected by this. The newly appointed leader has a clear view on how to move the Early Years Foundation Stage even further forward in the new unit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure higher attainers achieve as well as they can in Key Stage 1.
- Ensure consistency in the use of assessment information about pupils' progress.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure that subject leaders are fully involved in leading their subjects.

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

Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time pupils leave Year 6. This reflects satisfactory achievement from an above average start in Year 1. However, there is variability in the rate of progress made across the school. In 2008, standards at the end of Year 2 declined to below average, but the school has convincing evidence to show that the academic ability of the intake of pupils into Year 1 in 2007 was below that typical. School data and inspection evidence indicate that standards in Year 2 have risen again although more pupils could achieve the higher levels. In Year 6, results in the national tests have been above average in English, mathematics and science for a number of years. However, there was a decline in overall standards in mathematics in 2007. The school's data show that in 2008, this decline has been addressed with standards in English, mathematics and science all above average at both the expected and the higher levels. The school's data predict above average results for the current Year 6; they are achieving satisfactorily from their starting points. There are very good opportunities for older pupils to apply their basic skills to challenging situations and to use their initiative to direct their own learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from the support they receive which ensures satisfactory achievement overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

On the playground and in lessons pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently good. As a result of high expectations of staff, pupils are helpful and friendly and show respect to adults and each other. Pupils say they enjoy school and as a result, their attendance is good. They say school is, 'a nice place to be' and speak highly of adults in school. Staff are good role models and build effective relationships with pupils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall but pupils' awareness of other cultures is limited. Pupils have the opportunity to contribute their views through the school council and to take on responsibilities. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger pupils by acting as reading buddies and all pupils across the school have a good work ethic. This is reflected in their ability to get on independently in lessons and which prepares them for their future. Awareness of healthy lifestyles is promoted in school where pupils are encouraged to make healthy food choices and have opportunities to take part in sporting activities beyond the school day.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships and good classroom management that help pupils to want to learn are good factors in all classes. Where teaching is of a good quality the pace of lessons is good and work is very well matched to pupils needs. As a result, the quality of learning is of a high standard because pupils know what they need to do, are capable of doing it and enjoy being challenged to use their skills well. Where teaching is no better than satisfactory the objectives of lessons are not always made clear and questioning is not used well. In most classes pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work with each other and this contributes well to their speaking and listening skills. For example, in Year 2, pupils were keen to handle and discuss the possible use of Victorian artefacts. However, throughout Years 1 and 2, higher attainers are not always challenged by the work set. Teachers' marking in some classes makes pupils increasingly aware of their own attainment and explains how they can improve their work but this is inconsistent throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support and, hence, make satisfactory progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum contributes well to pupils' personal development. Pupils are given clear information about how to keep safe, to be healthy and to accept responsibility. This is helping them to become young citizens, enabling them to cope with changes and dangers in their lives. The school is exploring the promotion of enjoyment through learning by, for example, linking subjects together more effectively. There are examples of excellent curriculum practice in Year 6 where pupils use their writing skills outstanding well in topics linked to geography and history. However, in some age groups opportunities for pupils to develop their basic skills well in other subjects are missed. The curriculum is enriched through a satisfactory range of after-school activities, with good provision for sport. There are some opportunities for pupils to learn to play musical instruments but some parents would like this provision to be extended. Visits to local museums and visitors to the school such as a by a group of musicians add variety to the

curriculum and successfully foster an interest in learning and contribute immensely to pupils' enjoyment. For example, the efforts of one child to play a didgeridoo were enjoyed by all.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents are very happy about the level of personal care their children receive. Child protection and all other risk assessments are of a robust quality. Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school and know there is always an adult to turn to with any worries. This is because there is a very caring ethos, and very good relationships. Good procedures for improving attendance have led to attendance being above average. Pupils' academic progress, whilst satisfactory overall, is variable across the school. This is because the school's tracking of pupils' academic progress is not rigorous enough to enable teachers to identify at an early stage where extra support or challenge is needed. A very caring pastoral team ensures the needs of any vulnerable pupils are sensitively met. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported but there is variability in the quality of their individual education plans. There are good links with outside agencies. Pupils make a happy transition to and from school because of good liaison with outside agencies and parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The school's judgements about its effectiveness are overgenerous. However, the headteacher has identified the right areas for improvement and there are clear signs of improvement in mathematics, where standards have risen to the above average standards of previous years. He has continued to ensure the school has a very caring and nurturing ethos based on Christian values. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and their personal development is of a good quality. The school has rightly highlighted the need to involve subject leaders more in leading their areas of responsibility. Equality of opportunity is promoted soundly. Since the last inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. Very good links exist with parents and the local community, and community cohesion is satisfactory overall.

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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	3
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?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	3
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**

I am writing to you to thank you for your help during my visit to your school and to share with you my opinions about it. Your school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. All my team were impressed by how friendly you are, not just with us, but most importantly with each other. You behave very well, work hard and try your best in lessons.

We agree with you that your headteacher and teachers are very caring and help you very much if you have a problem or personal issue. The younger children in the Nursery and Reception get a great start to school life. In Years 1 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils get to Year 6 they do well in English, mathematics and science but we have asked your school to see that in other classes you do better, especially younger pupils in Years 1 and 2. The quality of pupils' writing in Year 6 is impressive. I visited Egypt at Christmas and the writing in your topic books about ancient Egypt brought it all back to me, thank you. In some classes across the school I feel that some of you are given work that is too easy, and have suggested that lessons could be improved with harder, more interesting work to help some of you to reach even higher standards. All the jobs you do in school and the way many of you help others, for example, reading buddies at lunchtimes is certainly helping you to become sound citizens of the future. It is good to see that many of you know what you need to do to be safe and keep healthy and fit.

Your headteacher provides all of you with very caring place to learn. You are given lots of help by teachers and teaching assistants which means that you are safe and secure at all times. I have asked the senior staff in the school to become more involved in leading their areas of responsibility. Also, the way the school tracks your progress is not as effective as it might be and I have asked your school to look at this issue as well.

I hope you continue to enjoy school and wish you the very best for your future.