

# St Raphael's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106242
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	324356
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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.

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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 (total)	158
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Casey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Brendan Marley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Huddersfield Road Millbrook Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 3JL

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	20 January 2009
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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 issues: the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS); the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6; and the quality of the school's provision. Evidence was collected from the observation of lessons, the scrutiny of pupils' work and records of their progress, and examination of other documentation including completed parents' questionnaires. Discussions were held with pupils, staff and representatives of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and in recent years the number of pupils on its roll has been rising. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few learn English as an additional language. The EYFS consists of a new unit that includes part-time Nursery children and Reception children.

Extended provision is available for pupils before and after school. That provision was inspected separately and will receive a separate report.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils and has some outstanding features. It has improved since the last inspection and resolved the areas for improvement found then. Leadership by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, is good and there is a very clear focus on promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils, and encouraging high achievement. Because of this, all groups of pupils make good progress in their personal and academic progress. The school has good capacity to improve and provides good value for money.

Achievement is good. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are broadly as expected for their age and make good progress throughout the school to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the very few whose first language is not English, achieve well in each year group. By the end of Year 2 standards in basic skills are above average. Good and at times outstanding teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2 results in pupils' skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing being particularly impressive. For instance, one lesson, in which a Year 3 pupil answered questions from other pupils on his interest, keeping bearded dragon lizards as pets, was very lively and informative. Standards of writing are very high, evident, for example, in the narrative writing that pupils in Year 5 undertook based on the story of the Willow Pattern. Promoting good skills in how to write for different purposes is embedded in teachers' excellent practice. Pupils develop skills of problem solving in mathematics very well because routines are taught in a very clear, structured way.

Relationships between staff and pupils are very harmonious and teachers track the progress of pupils well so that all pupils make good progress. Teachers use information and communication technology very imaginatively and effectively in lessons. By the end of Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are above average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 in English is often very high. Standards in science have recently varied from year to year. Staff have recognised this comparative weakness and have taken steps this year to improve pupils' skills, for example in handling data. As a result, standards in the current Year 6 are above average.

Pupils' personal development is good with outstanding features, such as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils behave exceptionally well, take a full part in lessons and make an excellent contribution to the life of the school in the care they show other pupils and the roles they take on, such as school councillors. Pupils have a good awareness of how diet can help promote a healthy life and they take part in a wide range of physical activities both during and after school to help them keep fit. Their awareness of personal safety develops exceptionally well thanks to the training older pupils receive before they go on to secondary school. They develop good skills of commitment and conscientiousness for later life.

Levels of attendance, however, are just below the national average and are undermined by the unsatisfactory attendance of a minority. Lateness of a few is a further weakness and the school has not put in place sufficiently robust systems to reduce these problems. In all other respects, the school's care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Current requirements to ensure the health, safety and protection of pupils as well as the safe recruitment of staff are in place. Staff know their pupils exceptionally well and their well-being is of paramount importance. Pupils understand their learning targets and become increasingly aware of what constitutes high standards in English and mathematics and what they need to do to achieve them.

The curriculum is good and has outstanding features. The emphasis given to teaching literacy and numeracy is excellent and there is a rich variety of creative and physical activities for pupils to experience. External specialists in fields such as art, dance, drama and sports often lead these. Pupils report how much they enjoy these experiences and the visits out of school. Of particular note is how pupils in Years 5 and 6 relish the annual residential trip to Paris. They learn two foreign languages, French and Italian, and pupils also have an exciting opportunity to take part in a local archaeological dig. The reason why the curriculum is not judged to be outstanding is because science is satisfactory rather than good and is currently the subject of review by the school.

Leadership, management and governance of the school are good with outstanding features. For example, the climate of aspiration and ambition in the school has been fostered exceptionally well by the headteacher, setting very challenging targets for staff to achieve with their pupils. He continually 'raises the bar' and leads by example in this. Forward planning is good. Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school and staff teamwork is a strong feature. School self-evaluation is good and the grades given to the different aspects of the school's work broadly match the judgements in this report. The school is increasingly a focus for the local community, through its EYFS provision, before and after school clubs and its partnership with the church. Its use of local specialists, for example, a parent teaching Italian to pupils, and the many links further afield and overseas mean the school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion.

The school, especially through the work of the deputy headteacher, has put in place in recent years several strategies to bolster links with parents, including an open-door policy, a website and regular newsletters. Though the great majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire are fulsome in their praise for the school, a minority consider communication with parents could be improved so that parents are better informed about their child's progress and about forthcoming events in school. Inspection findings demonstrate that this is an area for development. The school promotes equality of opportunity well in most respects but has yet to have a full impact on improving the attendance of a minority of pupils and communication with parents. It is for these reasons that leadership and management are not judged outstanding.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision is good and has significantly improved since the time of the last inspection when the accommodation was a serious cause for concern. All aspects of the accommodation have improved in the newly extended unit and, both indoors and outdoors, there are very good opportunities for children to learn.

Children join the Nursery class with attainment that is broadly typical for their age. They make at least good progress in all areas of learning so that, by the time they leave the Reception class, the great majority have reached the Early Learning Goals expected of them at this age and many are working beyond them. An outstanding feature of the provision is the way the staff promote the personal development and well-being of the children so that they make excellent progress in this aspect. The children display very good levels of concentration and independence and they cooperate and take turns exceptionally well. In their early skills of reading and writing, such as linking sounds and letters and mark making, the children make good progress, becoming confident learners.

Teaching and learning are good because staff work together as a team very well. There is a good balance between adult led and play-centred activities. Moreover, adults model their own use of language well to encourage the children's speaking skills. Staff assess the children's progress closely through observing them at work and play and adjust their teaching accordingly. Leadership and management of the EYFS are good. There is a strong commitment to the professional development of all staff and the newly appointed Nursery teacher is settling in well. The team has yet to review and audit systematically the quality of the provision in order to improve its overall effectiveness even more.

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

- Take steps to improve the attendance and lateness of a minority of pupils.
- Develop communication with parents to keep them well informed of their children's progress and of events in school.

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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 <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/or disabilities make progress	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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<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	1
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?	1
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 Raphael's Catholic Primary School, Stalybridge, SK15 3JL

It was a pleasure to inspect your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and we enjoyed finding out from you how much you enjoy learning. Now I would like to share with you what we thought about your school. It is providing you with a good education. Children get a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes and have so many opportunities to learn with each other through play. You continue to make good progress in all other years and, by the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach above average standards in the key subjects of English and mathematics. This is because the teaching you receive is good and you also work very hard.

Your behaviour is excellent and you look after each other so well. Members of the school council work hard to find out what you think and make suggestions. As a result, this is making your school even better. You particularly like the wide range of extra-curricular events and take a full part in arts, sports and music activities. Your teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you. They make sure that everyone feels safe and secure. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work.

Part of my job is to identify how the school can be even better. There are two things to do and you can help.

A minority of you are not attending school regularly enough. Some are regularly late for school. We all know how important it is not to miss lessons and to come to school on time because it badly affects your learning. So come on, we want to see an improvement here.

Some of your parents do not feel they know enough about what is happening in school and how you are getting on at your lessons. So we are asking the staff to do more in this respect. You can help here too by remembering to give your parents important letters and newsletters when you take them home.

Please continue to work hard. I send you all my best wishes for the future. To those of you visiting Paris in February, have a wonderful time!