

St Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106353
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	324377
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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)	239
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	Rev. Cleary
Headteacher	Mr Mark Mountcastle
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Glastonbury Road Stretford Manchester Lancashire M32 9PD

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Inspection number	324377

Telephone number
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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 impact of the quality of teaching and learning on pupils' progress in Years 1 and 2; the quality of provision and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage; the school's evidence to confirm the good standards and outstanding achievement by Year 6 and the rigour of leaders', managers' and governors' evaluation of school effectiveness. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation form, nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff who have management responsibilities, pupils and three governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence that the school's own assessments of these aspects, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

Situated about five miles from the centre of Manchester, the school serves a community split by a motorway. There is a mixture of housing and in some areas, there are significant economic and social problems. The school is average in size and has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage with a Nursery and two Reception classes. 5% of pupils are from minority ethnic families and only one or two speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has gained an Activemark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school and is providing excellent value for money. Parents and governors praise their 'dedicated and wonderful' headteacher. His highly effective leadership and management are key factors in helping the school to be happy, welcoming and successful. All pupils are valued and cared for in a supportive yet stimulating learning environment. Parents' comments such as 'privileged to attend' and 'fantastic school where every child is made to feel special' reflect their overwhelming support. The pupil council gave the school 'nine and a half out of ten because nowhere is perfect!'

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their sustained above average attendance shows how much they enjoy school and how determined they are not to miss out on the many exciting learning opportunities provided daily. Community spirit is strong and typified by the very impressive mural in the hall on 'Coming to church' which staff, pupils and members of the community helped to create in the style of a Lowry painting. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils take pride in earning 'Golden' tickets, house and table points. Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary, showing pupils' respect for staff, for one another and their keenness to do well. The provision for French and Spanish and links to schools in Japan, Eritrea and Spain add further to pupils' excellent cultural awareness and knowledge. All have a firm understanding of a healthy lifestyle and ways to keep safe. There is a walking bus to school and the headteacher sets a good example by taking his turn at leading this each week. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities such as fencing, judo and cheerleading. All pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education, gaining valuable skills from the excellent curriculum and extensive range of after-school activities.

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. They enter school with skills that are generally below average and leave Year 6 with standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above average. The significantly above average standards by Year 6 have been maintained for the past five years. Inspection evidence and school data show a further small improvement in overall standards, continuing the trend of progressive improvement. This is an achievement in itself given the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in some year groups and the relatively small numbers where the performance of individual pupils can have a marked effect. It reflects the excellent support provided for pupils who find learning difficult. Standards by the end of Year 2 were rising over a three year period. Current standards are broadly average, but there was a dip last year and overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics were just below average due to the much higher proportion of pupils with learning difficulties in this small year group. Nevertheless, school data shows that many pupils made excellent progress from their starting points in Year 1. The school has in place some very effective strategies to raise standards by the end of Year 2 and pupils are on track to reach the ambitious targets the school has set. The transition from Reception into Year 1 is managed carefully. Pupils benefit from an extension of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in Years 1 and 2 and the outstanding quality of teaching.

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum is outstanding. 'What an interesting and exciting year!' was a typical comment from parents about the curriculum. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan an exciting, challenging, engaging and creative curriculum. Pupils, for example, thoroughly enjoyed creating and performing a rap while keeping the beat with percussion instruments and pleading their case with the king's messenger who wanted to knock their house down after the Fire of London! Vibrant displays of pupils' artwork show the

breadth and quality of the curriculum and create a stimulating learning environment. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Teachers assess individual pupils' progress carefully and are quick to identify any not making the expected progress. Their marking gives pupils clear and detailed guidance on how to improve. Pupils are becoming reliable in accurately assessing their work and their progress towards their own targets.

The outstanding care and concern for everyone's welfare is evident and all safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils say they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. The school's strong links with outside agencies ensure that individual needs for vulnerable pupils or those experiencing learning difficulties are met effectively enabling all to make outstanding progress. The school effectively supports the very few pupils who are learning English.

All staff work very well as a team and equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination is central to their work. Their collective determination to raise standards is having a marked impact on how well pupils achieve and is reflected in challenging targets. Good delegation of management responsibilities has led to teachers forming an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and relevant priorities for improvement have been identified. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good. Excellent links with the local community and the very strong links with other countries are adding significantly to pupils' knowledge of their own locality and the international community. The school has audited its place within the local and wider communities and is preparing its strategy to further improve each link.

Governance is good. About a third of governors are recently appointed and they join a governing body which is passionate about the school that some of them attended. Knowledgeable and deeply committed to continuous improvement, all are keen to develop their role in helping the school to evaluate its effectiveness, but have not yet developed the procedures to enable them to contribute effectively enough to the process. Nevertheless, the school has an outstanding capacity to go on improving.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

'The staff really do make learning irresistible for the children' is a typical quote from parents. Children get an outstanding start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many enter with skills that are below what is typical for their age, but because of the high quality of provision, make outstanding progress from their starting points. Currently, many children finish their Reception Year with higher skills than is typically expected for their age. This is an improvement on previous years and reflects the effectiveness of leadership and management in strengthening the quality of provision. Children's personal development is carefully nurtured and is a particular strength due to the care and support of teachers and other adults. Children are happy and feel safe and secure. They know how to share and get on very well with one another. They thoroughly enjoy the varied and exciting learning experiences provided. Nursery children, for example, had made their own cardboard ambulance with an engine under the bonnet and filled it with 'petrol' from the model petrol pump. All enjoyed acting out the roles of people who help them. Teachers use observations to check daily on children's progress and are quick to tailor new learning experiences to meet their needs. Staff encourage children to move freely indoors or outdoors, giving them the independence to choose from the wide range of activities offered. All staff work as a highly effective team and with the outstanding leader, are constantly looking for ways to improve provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the role of governors in evaluating the effectiveness of the 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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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 Hugh of Lincoln RC Primary School, Manchester, M32 9PD

Thank you for telling me the story of St Hugh of Lincoln who befriended a swan and showing me the postcard of the scene. You certainly followed his example in your friendly welcome to the inspectors. You are right to be proud of your school and I can see why you enjoy every day so much. It is outstanding!

In the Nursery and Reception classes, your teachers and their helpers are working very hard to make sure you have lots of interesting things to enjoy both indoors and outside. The ambience that you made was superb and I could see how interested you were in all the activities that helped you to find out more about worms.

It was good to see all of you from Nursery to Year 6 taking part so enthusiastically in the 'wake-up and shake-up session' with your teachers. I was most impressed by your excellent behaviour in lessons and around school and by some of your work and models on display. Some of my favourites, apart from 'Coming to Church' in the hall were the haunted house by Year 4, the 'Funny bones' and African life' displays with their charcoal sketches and your paintings in the styles of Pieter Bruegel and Monet. By Year 6, your achievement is outstanding with your work in English, mathematics and science being well above average. The written work in Year 6 showed how high standards are when they used phrases like 'cannoned down the stairs' as they thought like a writer to describe a special day. All of you concentrate so well and work very hard. Teachers and their helpers are certainly quick to help you if you need it.

It was a pleasure to meet all of your teachers and their helpers. They are doing an excellent job planning such interesting and exciting things for you to do every day. It is easy to see why you love school so much.

I have asked your school governors to help staff more as they try to find ways to make your school even better.

Congratulations to all of you for helping to make your school as brilliant as it is and for making our visit to your school one to remember. By the way, I knew my leg was being pulled when one of you told me the best thing about school was home time!