

Our Lady's RC Primary School Manchester

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105543
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	336514
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Tarpey
Headteacher	Mrs C Page
Date of previous school inspection	2 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed learning in 15 lessons taught by nine teachers for periods of time between 20 and 30 minutes. Several other lessons were visited for shorter periods of time. Meetings were held with school staff, governors, pupils and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's tracking data, work in pupils' books, policy documents, reports from the local authority and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also analysed the views expressed in questionnaires by pupils, staff and 159 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school was at closing gaps in attainment for different groups of pupils, particularly for Caribbean boys
- if the school was able to maintain the improvement in achievement seen in last years Year 6 test results
- how effectively the capacity of leadership had been developed beyond that of the headteacher
- the effectiveness of support for pupils who arrive at the school midway through the year.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving an area with high levels of socio-economic deprivation. Most pupils are from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils believed to speak English as an additional language is above average. The proportion of pupils who move in or out of the school during the school year is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average as is the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. The school has been awarded many accreditations including; the Inclusion Mark, International Schools award, National Healthy School award, Eco bronze award and the Activemark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

The outstanding contribution that this school makes to the lives of young people is quite remarkable. This school is a highly cohesive community where pupils and staff work together in a culture of exceptionally high expectations and generous mutual support. Parents are highly supportive of the work of the school and pupils appear to be unanimous in their appreciation for their teachers.

The quality of relationships between pupils and staff is very high. A tangible sense of trust exists throughout the whole-school community. This is largely due to the impressive way that the school provides pastoral care for its pupils. It appears that no challenge is ever seen as insurmountable. Staff and governors go to incredible lengths to support and nurture each pupil. Lead by their inspirational headteacher, the school community strives to overcome considerable barriers to provide an incredibly safe and supportive environment where pupils develop outstanding personal attributes and achieve well academically.

Teaching is outstanding and pupils' attitudes in lessons are first-rate. Inspectors were astounded at the enthusiasm and determination displayed in lessons by many pupils. Pupils' personal development is also very positive with pupils displaying high levels of empathy, support and camaraderie with their peers and their teachers.

As a result of the school's concerted efforts to improve teaching, rates of progress have improved across the school and the differences in performance seen between different groups of learners are being narrowed sharply. Support strategies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are highly effective at enabling these pupils to make progress in line with their peers. Achievement is improving, most impressively in mathematics and reading. Rates of progress in writing, while improving, are moving at a slower pace. That said, the school has very credible plans that, with their proven boundless energy and absolute determination, are likely to continue to drive up standards in this area. The school has improved in almost every area since the last inspection. Most significantly, the leadership in the school is now outstanding because the much improved capacity among middle leaders and governors now means that the school is not overly reliant on the headteacher and assistant headteacher. Leaders at all levels are highly effective at driving improvements, based on highly effective evaluation, with a sense of enthusiastic determination. Consequently, their capacity to improve further is also outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standards of attainment in writing so they are nearer to those of reading

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by:

- further developing a systematic approach to teaching the skills of writing across all subjects
- ensure that marking is always helpful in supporting the development of writing skills
- further developing exciting and engaging stimulus for writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are anxious to learn. Their behaviour and willingness to rise to challenges are significant factors in their success. Relationships are strong and mutual trust is evident. It is as common to hear laughing and clapping in lessons as it is to see pupils focusing hard to master new and challenging concepts. Pupils enjoy celebrating their achievements and the achievements of others. Pupils achieve well overall and there are clear signs that achievement is improving. Last year's leavers made good progress overall and reached standards of attainment that were above the national average. The current Year 6, a less able cohort, have made equally good progress and are likely to reach broadly average standards of attainment.

Pupils behaviour, supported by what they told inspectors, shows that they feel very safe in school. They have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe and understand their responsibilities to ensure their peers feel emotionally safe. Because of this, pupils are very comfortable in expressing themselves and contributing fully to the life of the school.

Pupils' attitudes to health are a strength. Physical education is of an exceptionally high quality and the schools tracking data show that significant numbers of pupils regularly take part in a wide range of sporting and other fitness-based activities. Pupils have a very well developed understanding of healthy diets. Several pupils confidently told inspectors about the different food types found in their school dinners and the proportions needed to maintain a healthy diet.

Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the school community. A wide range of opportunities exist for pupils to engage in with the wider local, national and international community. Pupils recognise the important role they have in maintaining the schools' highly positive atmosphere. Pupils are fully involved in decision making within school. For example, the schools highly effective behaviour policy is based on pupils' views of inappropriate behaviour and their suggestions for how the school might develop positive attitudes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The outstanding quality of teaching is a significant factor in the improvements seen since the last inspection. Teachers are highly skilled at matching work exactly to pupils' needs, abilities and interests. Innovative ways of celebrating success have a high profile in school and pupils, without prompting, are excited to show what they have achieved. Expectations are exceptionally high for behaviour, attitudes and class work. These expectations are constantly reinforced and regularly celebrated.

The curriculum is well designed so it captures pupils' interest. The range and quality of enrichment activities is impressive. Sport and fitness have a high profile and pupils enjoy the wide range of high quality opportunities to take part in physical activities throughout the school day. Trips, visits and visitors are used well to provide memorable experiences and spark pupils' imaginations. These activities are used well as a stimulus for learning in class. The school is striving to develop specific activities that motivate pupils to write. Academic support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils is strong and contributes well to their good achievement. Teachers are skilled at developing language across the curriculum. For example, in every mathematics lesson seen, teachers explored the use of mathematical language with pupils and ensured that spoken sentence structure and use of vocabulary was accurate. Guidance for the development of writing skills is more variable. The school acknowledges that they are yet to fully develop a whole-school system to develop the skills of writing. While individual teachers are effective at developing skills needed for writing, this good practice has not been fully shared.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are exceptionally good. Support is very

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Carefully targeted for potentially vulnerable pupils and, as a result, these pupils achieve in line with their peers. Pupils arriving at the school partway through the year are very well integrated into school life and supported exceptionally well. As a result, they settle quickly. Families are well supported. The school has appointed additional support staff to provide this support to families. When a problem beyond school exists, the school community works as one to support each other and pupils' families so barriers are overcome and stability is maintained.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership, including governance, has been strengthened considerably since the last inspection. Leaders at all levels now share a common purpose and are conspicuous in their combined success. All leaders have an exceptionally strong understanding of the school's strengths and areas where they want to develop further. They have incredibly high expectations of themselves and the wider staff team. They have been able to galvanise the support of the whole-school community in moving forward at pace.

The promotion of equality is central the school's ethos. Leaders track the performance of groups rigorously and take exceptionally decisive action when patterns of underperformance appear. As a result, groups that have previously underachieved now achieve in line with their peers. The school is an outstandingly cohesive community.

Pupils celebrate their commonality while recognising differences positively. Pupils develop a comprehensive appreciation of communities different to their own through the schools' excellent range of links with other schools in the United Kingdom and abroad.

Safeguarding procedures are exceptionally robust and consistently applied by staff throughout the school. Inspectors were checked by pupils as part of their 'stranger danger' procedures. High quality systems, policies and checks are very well applied and regularly reviewed.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

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The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception classes. Staff know the children well and offer exciting activities which are well matched to children's interests and abilities. Lessons readily engage children and ignite their imagination. Children are motivated, work well together and successfully share, cooperate and help each other in their learning. Children are exceptionally well cared for and welfare requirements, including safeguarding are robustly met.

Leaders monitor the provision effectively and prioritise their actions. As a result, indoor provision is highly stimulating and resources are good. However, children have fewer opportunities to learn and play independently outdoors. Parents have high regard for the quality of what is provided. Overall, children make good progress and leave for Year 1 having achieved and sometimes exceeded the early learning goals expected for their age.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Return rates were higher than usual with just under 70% of parents/carers returning a questionnaire. Almost all were highly positive about the work of the school. A very few

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parents and carers commented on the quality of communication from school. Governors and leaders stated that this was an area that they are determined to improve. Inspectors found that the school makes considerable efforts to communicate with parents and carers, including those who speak English as an additional language. A similar number commented on the difficulties caused by parking at the end of the school day. Inspectors found that the school was doing all it could do by working with the police to eradicate illegal parking outside school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Our Lady's RC Primary School Manchester to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 159 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 241 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	121	76	37	23	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	119	75	38	24	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	106	67	50	31	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	98	62	55	35	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	112	70	46	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	100	63	54	34	2	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	103	65	49	31	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	81	51	67	42	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	91	57	59	37	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	112	70	42	26	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	90	57	57	36	7	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	103	65	52	33	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	72	44	28	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Our Lady's RC Primary School Manchester, Manchester, M16 8AW

You may remember that we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to let you know what we found out. We found that your school is doing a fantastic job at helping you develop into well-rounded young people. We found your school to be outstanding. This is the highest grade inspectors can give a school.

We were impressed with so many things in your school. I could not list them all here so these are just a few:

- Your behaviour in lessons and around school is quite special. You should all be very proud of how you contribute to your school's success.
- Inspectors were very impressed with how your school cares and supports you. We were particularly impressed with how your school helps support some of you and your families when you face challenges that might make learning more difficult.
- We were impressed with the range of activities you have in school, the number of other schools around the world you have contact with and the opportunities you have for staying healthy.
- We found that your teachers do a really good job of teaching you at just the right level. Because of this, you are making much better progress than in the past.

We have asked your school to help you do even better in writing. We did see that this is getting better in school, but we also noticed that you do a lot better in mathematics and reading.

Thank you all for talking with us during the inspection. We really enjoyed meeting you.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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