

St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105808
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	336561
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Bailey
Headteacher	Mrs J Abbott
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited thirteen lessons and observed eight teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including the school's updated self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, internal and external monitoring of the school and 50 returned questionnaires from parents and carers, 85 pupil questionnaires and 17 staff questionnaires.

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

- Achievement and attainment at both key stages and whether improvements for pupils in Year 6 are being sustained.
- The effectiveness of the school's promotion of community cohesion and pupils' involvement in the wider community.
- The effectiveness of teaching, assessment to support learning and the curriculum, in developing pupils' achievement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has achieved National Healthy School Status. The school has been through a period of significant staff turbulence but staffing is now stable. Pupils are able to attend a before- and after-school care club managed by the governing body.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where pupils thrive. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good: children are cared for well and make good progress. Parents of children across all ages comment, 'This is a very happy school.' Many pupils comment on how much they enjoy lessons and like coming to school. The care of pupils is at the heart of the school's character; all staff focus effectively on the personal and academic development for individuals because they are highly motivated by leaders and managers. Pupils feel safe and secure. They have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and are keen participants in the many sports activities on offer. Although pupils' attendance is broadly average, the number of pupils who are persistently absent is too high. This means these pupils miss much learning.

The quality of teaching is predominantly good. It is less effective when pupils do not have enough opportunity to be actively involved in their learning. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour help to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress to attain above average standards in most subjects by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment in English is average; although reading skills are above average, writing is less assured, especially for boys, than other basic skills because it is not fully developed in other subjects.

The school has an accurate understanding of its strengths as well as areas to improve. Attainment has risen over the past two years and current pupils' work demonstrates continuing improvement. The governing body is well led and focused on school improvement. The school has acted effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Attainment has improved, and pupils' understanding of how well they are doing in their work, as well as what they need to do in order to move forward in their learning, is a significant improvement. These developments, stable staffing and strong leadership and management, demonstrate the school's good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' and especially boys' attainment in writing by developing its use across most subjects.
- Involve pupils more in their learning by ensuring that all teaching is consistently good and better.
- Reduce the number of persistent absences by greater engagement with parents and outside agencies.

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Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils achieve well from below average starting points in Nursery. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils enjoy learning particularly in lessons where they are active and involved. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils competed vigorously to achieve good quality work in an atmosphere of high expectation and challenge. Pupils' attainment is above average overall and is particularly strong in mathematics and science. Standards in writing were broadly average last year, although below average for boys; the school has begun to include writing in the teaching of many other subjects to focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Vulnerable pupils are rapidly identified and provided with carefully focused support.

Pupils are very polite and engaging young people because they are valued as individuals. They welcome opportunities to take on responsibility and take great pride, for instance, in their roles on the school council and as 'playground buddies' helping younger pupils. They are very keen to recycle waste and many pupils enjoy their involvement on the 'Eco committee'. They make good contributions to the school and local community and are further developing their contributions to the wider community. Parents and carers are becoming much more involved in their children's learning through detailed reports of their children's progress and individual meetings with staff. Good preparation for secondary education, above average standards overall, and pupils' good social skills all contribute to preparing pupils well for their future. Despite pupils' strong spiritual, moral and social development pupils' experiences and awareness of those from backgrounds which differ from their own are limited. The school has planned opportunities for pupils to find out at first-hand about other cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

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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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Positive relationships and pupils' good attitudes to learning characterise lessons. Most are enjoyable and well-planned, providing a range of activities which engage pupils' interests and this enables them to learn well and make good progress. For instance, Year 4 pupils enjoyed the challenging pace and analytical discussion required of them during a mathematics lesson. Skilful teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well and help them learn effectively. Lesson planning is generally well matched to the needs and interests of each pupil but does not always involve pupils enough in their learning. In these lessons pupils are less engaged because their teacher speaks for too long.

The curriculum is becoming more stimulating because it is starting to be planned in 'themes'. Pupils are learning more because they can link their basic skills to studies in, for example, geography, history, information and communication technology and art, thus developing their curiosity and interest in learning. There are missed opportunities to develop the provision for writing in a similar way. The school environment is welcoming and informative. Children and pupils enjoy the before- and after-school clubs in a safe, secure and well-organised environment. They relish opportunities to speak to each other and visitors in French or Spanish because of the well-planned modern foreign languages provision.

Each pupil is valued and known individually. This is a strong principle of the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of timely and well-tailored support; they develop their confidence and skills through the individual support that is provided. The school works effectively with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to meet the needs of individuals.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, acting deputy headteacher and governors are committed in their drive to improve outcomes for pupils. All staff share this vision because of the headteacher's determination to involve them in her drive to improve pupils' life chances, both academically and personally. Work is mostly well adapted to meet pupils' requirements and, overall, pupils meet, and sometimes exceed, their challenging targets. Parents are very supportive and increasingly involved in the school's work. Leaders acknowledge that persistent absence is too high and have an action plan in place to reduce absence, but the outcome has yet to be seen. The school has a positive profile within the local community because pupils are encouraged to be conscientious citizens. They litter pick and often sing or act at venues in the local area. Leaders recognise the school's context with regard to community cohesion on a wider scale and the need to take this aspect further in order to prepare pupils more fully for life in a multicultural society.

Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. The school is active in the local community and works with local primary and secondary schools to improve its work further. Good partnerships with outside agencies lead to a strong focus on pupils' personal and academic development. School self-evaluation is accurate and has led to effective monitoring of the school's performance; the school is aware of the need to set appropriate timescales in planning improvements. Equality of opportunity for all and tackling discrimination are a bedrock of the school's character and they are promoted well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school with skills that are below those typical for their age, especially in some aspects of their language, communication and mathematical development. They happily settle into school routines and quickly grow in confidence and independence as they choose their own activities for playing and learning. Children make good progress in all aspects of their learning. This is because teaching is good and children enjoy a wide range of well-planned activities that engage their interest and encourage them to explore for themselves. Relationships are good and children are safe and well cared for in this secure and welcoming environment. All welfare procedures are in place and meet current requirements. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's early reading, writing and number skills and this is effectively supported by well-resourced practical indoor activities. Nevertheless, more limited use of the outdoor space reduces opportunities to develop the children's physical skills and extend their experiences across all areas of learning. They show good levels of concentration on the tasks to hand and delight in role play as shopkeepers and teachers. Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and use a good range of resources and examples of children's creative work to provide a bright, stimulating learning environment. There are good links with parents and carers, who are very supportive of their children's learning both in school and at home.

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

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded through the completed questionnaires were happy with the school's provision and indicated that their children enjoy school. The vast majority of parents and carers also agreed that the school helps their child to have a healthy lifestyle and that the school met their child's individual needs. Inspectors agree that these aspects are good. There was a very small number of concerns about behaviour but inspectors found no evidence to support these. The school is working hard to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning and the school's website is currently being redesigned in order to increase parental involvement.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 193 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	62	16	32	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	60	20	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	54	22	44	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	50	24	48	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	54	23	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	46	26	52	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	40	29	58	1	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)	21	42	27	54	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	52	23	46	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	28	26	52	6	12	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	38	27	54	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	54	20	40	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	62	15	30	2	4	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 pupil's 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.



Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gabriel's Church of England Primary School, Manchester, M24 2BE

It was lovely to visit your school. The inspection team thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and listened carefully to what you had to say. The inspectors also looked carefully at your comments in the questionnaires. You told us how much you enjoy school life. Yours is a good school and it is also good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You are well behaved, polite and welcoming. Well done to each one of you!

You help and care for each other. Younger children settle down well in the Nursery class and you make sure that older pupils look after the younger ones. You are well cared for and feel very safe in school. This makes an important contribution to your future because your work is good and you are confident young people.

You are keen to learn and this helps you to achieve well. We have asked your school to involve you even more in your learning in all your lessons. We would like you to improve your standards in writing, especially boys, and have asked teachers to include opportunities for you to write in most other subjects. Attendance for a small number of you is not as good as it could be. With school support, you and your families can help improve it. Your headteacher and all the staff are working hard to make your school even better.

I wish you every success for your future.

Yours sincerely

Marie Cordey

Lead inspector

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