

St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105825
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	336565
Inspection dates	21–22 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Mary Chadwick
Headteacher	Ms Claire Ahern
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed taught by eight teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors also analysed 29 questionnaire returns from parents and carers, and took account of 85 from pupils and 28 from staff.

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

- the consistency of pupils' progress as they move between key stages
- attendance and the effectiveness of the school's procedures to improve it
- the quality of education provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average school in which a broadly average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British. However, a rise in the number of pupils joining the school from abroad, especially Poland, means that an above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Green Tree Award.

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. It provides pupils with outstanding care, guidance and support, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who join the school with little or no English. As a result, these pupils make good progress and are fully included in the harmonious life of the school.

Overall pupils achieve well, especially in Key Stage 2 where teaching is consistently good with some that is outstanding. Pupils attain average standards. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is more variable because the quality of teaching is inconsistent. In the Early Years Foundation Stage satisfactory teaching does not fully exploit the good resources and facilities to give children enough opportunities to choose activities for themselves. Also, the very good outdoor facilities are not used effectively or regularly enough to stimulate children's learning and development. In Key Stage 1, teaching occasionally lacks the necessary pace and challenge to make sure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The school has worked hard and successfully to develop its curriculum. Exciting topic work is a strong feature of provision for pupils. This adds relevancy and interest to developing pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT).

Pupils enjoy school. 'I love it. The teachers make learning fun. I'm going to miss it so much when I leave,' is the view of one older pupil. Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around school. They are respectful to adults working with them and to each other. They are welcoming to visitors and to pupils who join the school from abroad. Their good levels in basic skills and their maturity by the time they leave mean that pupils are in a good position to take advantage of the next steps in their education. The school has been rigorous in tackling attendance. A wide range of initiatives to promote the importance of attendance and clamp down on pupils who are too frequently absent has improved attendance so that it is now above average.

Good leadership and management with the support of a good governing body are driving the school strongly forward. Self-evaluation is accurate. Effective teamwork across the school is leading to improvement in several areas of the school's work such as the quality of care, guidance and support and attendance. As a result, the school demonstrates good capacity for sustaining further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 by:

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- ensuring teaching is always stimulating and challenging
- ensuring children in Early Years Foundation Stage have enough opportunities to choose activities and to use regularly the outside facilities.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy learning. In lessons they are keen to answer questions. They contribute effectively in groups and pairs to share ideas. Pupils take pride in presenting their work neatly. They settle to work quickly and enthusiastically. Most are keen to give of their best. Only occasionally does pupils' attention wander when teaching does not stimulate their interest fully or when tasks are too easy or too difficult. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is generally below age-related expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is average and improving. This represents good overall achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak little or no English when they join the school also achieve well because of the high quality support they receive.

Pupils know how important it is to stay healthy. They enjoy participating in the wide range of sporting enrichment activities. Even the youngest children can articulate what foods are good and bad for them and why. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities in school such as by becoming ambassadors to promote community cohesion. They are active in the local community and are successful fund-raisers for a range of charities. Pupils value the active school council which has been instrumental in bringing about improvement to playground facilities, for example. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are respectful of those who are different, show good understanding of right and wrong and are keen to find out about the world beyond their immediate surroundings.

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	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	2
Pupils' behaviour	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 adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is never less than satisfactory. Most is good and some is outstanding, especially in Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most of them use it well to challenge pupils by using questioning skilfully to make pupils think hard and justify their answers. Teaching makes effective use of pair and group work to promote pupils' skills as independent learners. Lessons have clear learning objectives at the start and in most lessons pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Assessment information is used effectively to tailor tasks to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. Occasionally, however, tasks are given to pupils that are too easy or too difficult. Teachers use ICT effectively to add clarity and interest to pupils' learning. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Comments are usually helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve. Skilled teaching assistants make very significant contributions to supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with limited English so that their progress is good.

The good curriculum uses themed topics effectively to capture pupils' imagination and spur their interest. Pupils say how much they enjoy topic work. There is a good range of after-school activities in sports and the arts which add to pupils' enjoyment and adoption of healthy lifestyles. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe in school and valued as individuals. Highly effective transition arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children settle quickly. Similarly, strong transition arrangements ensure that pupils are very well prepared for the move to secondary school. Very effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language helps them overcome barriers to learning.

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	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management are driving the school strongly forward. They provide a sharp focus on improvement. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities effectively and thoughtfully to promote good teamwork. Expectations to raise attainment are high. Development planning is good and concentrates on priorities that will make the school even more effective. The school sets and meets challenging targets. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. It results in most teachers being aware of what they need to do to make their teaching better and more effective. Relationships with parents and carers are good. The establishment of a parents' forum is promoting a strong link between the school and home.

Good attention to providing equal opportunities and tackling discrimination ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and newcomers are integrated seamlessly into the everyday life of the school. The fact that all pupils regardless of background or ability make good progress demonstrates the school's strong commitment to and success in promoting equality of opportunity.

Safeguarding procedures are good. The school adopts recommended good practice for its procedures and policies relating to safeguarding. Meticulous attention is paid to risk assessment. Staff training in safeguarding and child protection is regular and of good quality. Good links have been established with outside agencies to provide specialist support when need is identified.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has a comprehensive action plan to guide its work. Pupils work hard in school to create a harmonious community. They are active in the local community, especially in supporting church activities. They have first-hand experience of other religions and cultures through visits, visitors and the school's partnership work with other schools. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of world cultures and religions. The school goes some way to evaluating its impact on community cohesion but accepts that it could conduct this more systematically.

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

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	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The school has invested heavily in improving facilities and resources in the Early Years Foundation Stage; they are now good. They provide children with a secure and stimulating environment for work and play. The school also provides strong support for leadership, teaching and the curriculum through visits to other Early Years Foundation Stage providers and through local authority advice and support. However, it is taking time for these initiatives to impact fully. Leadership, teaching and the curriculum are not stronger than satisfactory because they are not yet exploiting fully the good facilities to raise the overall quality of education. For example, children are not routinely involved in choosing their own learning activities leading to a preponderance of teacher-led activities; and the outdoor facilities are underutilised to promote pupils' physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result, children's progress and achievement are generally satisfactory, although a few, especially more able children make good progress.

Children's personal development is good overall. They feel safe, are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and generally enjoy coming to school. Adults working with children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provide very effective levels of care, guidance and support. As a result, children settle quickly when they join the Early Years Foundation Stage. Their needs and abilities are assessed accurately. Parents and carers are informed regularly about their children's welfare and progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

There was a low return of questionnaires from parents and carers. However, the school had recently carried out its own survey to which 87 parents had responded and which was made available to the inspection team. In both surveys, a majority of the

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questionnaires were supportive of the school. However, 28% of parents or carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and 12% of parents or carers who responded to the school's survey thought that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors looked closely at behaviour in lessons and around school which led to the conclusion that behaviour is generally good and the school has appropriate procedures to deal with behaviour which is unacceptable. 17% of parents or carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire and 12% who responded to the school's survey also felt that the school does not take account of their views. In addition, 24% of parents or carers responding to the Ofsted questionnaire felt that the school does not help them to support their child's learning. Inspectors were satisfied that the school is tackling both of these areas rigorously through, for example: the establishment of a parents' forum to seek the views and opinions of parents and carers more systematically; the introduction of emailing and texting facilities for parents and carers; the on-going development of the website and learning platform; and the implementation of a programme of home visits for new families.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale 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 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 175 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	15	52	13	45	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	66	9	31	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	13	45	10	34	5	17	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	45	11	38	4	14	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	59	9	31	2	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	45	8	28	7	24	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	48	11	38	3	10	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)	15	52	12	41	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	48	11	38	3	10	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	41	8	28	6	21	2	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	11	38	11	38	3	10	2	7
The school is led and managed effectively	14	48	9	31	2	7	3	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	45	11	38	4	14	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.



23 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale, Rochdale, OL11 2TN

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you and see you at work and play.

You will be pleased to hear that you go to a good school. The care, guidance and support your school provides for you are outstanding. It supports your good learning and makes sure you feel safe and valued. You get on very well with each other and with the adults working with you. Your teachers provide you with good teaching and interesting things to do so that you all make good progress and achieve well, especially in Key Stage 2. You behave well and are keen to do your best – well done! It was very pleasing to see that attendance is improving – again, well done!

Your school is always looking for ways to make things better, so to help it do this, I am asking your headteacher and the governors to:

- make sure that lessons for children in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2 are always exciting and work is set just at the right level
- make sure that the children in the Reception class have more opportunities to choose activities and to use the new outdoor area.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard and help your school go from strength to strength in the coming years.

I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Stephen Wall

Lead inspector

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