

# St John Fisher Roman Catholic Primary School, Rochdale

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105849
<b>Local Authority</b>	Rochdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	336570
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Adrian Francis

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Tadhg Mullins
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs A Kenny
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2006
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, observed eight teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including planning, tracking data, the school improvement plan, policies and procedures, and analysis of pupils' work. The inspectors scrutinised questionnaires completed by staff, pupils in Years 3 to 6 and those from 44 parents and carers.

- strategies used to raise attainment across the school and to improve progress for identified groups of pupils
- the quality of teaching, in particular the impact of teaching on attainment in English
- the strength of the school's leadership, particularly with reference to the pupils' personal development.

## Information about the school

This is a slightly smaller than average primary school with most pupils being Roman Catholic. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly higher than average and the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is in a single Reception class. The school has received the Investors in People Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools Award and the Extended Schools award and is working towards the full standard for Eco-schools and the International Schools 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

St John Fisher Primary School provides a good education for its pupils. Outstanding features are: pupils' behaviour; the extent to which pupils contribute to the school and the wider community; the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; and the excellent care, support and guidance it provides. Outstanding safeguarding procedures ensure that pupils feel exceptionally safe in school. Work with a wide range of partners makes a good contribution to pupils' good achievement and well-being. Attendance rates are low, but have improved significantly over the past year.

Pupils' achievement is good. From below average starting points pupils leave Year 6 with broadly average attainment. This is due to the determined efforts by the school's leadership to tackle areas needing improvement. Effective strategies are strengthening the quality of teaching and have developed the good quality curriculum, as well as ensuring that the quality of care, guidance and support for all pupils is very high. As a result, behaviour is excellent and pupils are keen to learn and to do their best. They enjoy their time in school and their contribution to the school community is exemplary. Attainment is generally higher than at the time of the last inspection because the quality of teaching is now good and there are effective systems in place for monitoring the progress that pupils are making. Where teaching is most effective, teachers demonstrate a good understanding of how well pupils have progressed and the marking of pupils' work clearly indicates what the pupils need to do in order to improve their work further. However, this is not always the case and there is not sufficient emphasis on pupils being encouraged to improve their work following teachers' marking.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high quality support they receive. The expectations of those pupils who learn more quickly than others are not always high enough and so the work set does not always fully match their abilities. These pupils do not have enough opportunities to work independently and this restricts their progress. Good systems are in place to check accurately the effectiveness of the school's work. Attainment in writing is lower than in reading or mathematics, although the school is aware of this and is taking effective steps to tackle this issue.

Led by the headteacher, the school has drive and a clear vision and the professional partnerships among the staff have been successful in moving the school forward and in providing a very caring and supportive ethos for all pupils. The school's self-evaluation is robust and this has led to an accurate analysis of its performance. The school has a good capacity to improve as is evident in some of the developments made since the last inspection.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils by:
  - raising expectations of what they can achieve
  - providing them with more opportunities for independent work
  - ensuring tasks are fully matched to their abilities and learning needs.
- Ensure consistency in teachers' marking in order to improve pupils' progress by:
  - providing consistent, structured comments to show pupils how to improve their work
  - providing time for pupils to respond regularly to teachers' comments.
- Raise attainment in writing by:
  - providing more regular opportunities for pupils to undertake sustained, independent work across a range of subjects
  - evaluating the impact of current strategies and taking appropriate actions.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils are keen to discuss their learning and progress and take pride in their work. Harmonious relationships exist throughout the school and these enable pupils to work effectively and respond well to teachers' guidance. The pace of learning is generally brisk, enabling pupils to make generally good progress. Pupils who learn more quickly, however, do not always achieve the levels they could. Although attainment and progress in writing are lower than in reading and in mathematics, assessment information, pupils' work and lessons seen by inspectors demonstrate that overall progress is good. Pupils in Year 6 attain broadly average standards with some examples of very high quality work being produced. This represents good achievement overall.

Pupils are extremely positive about their school. They feel very safe and this is confirmed by the overwhelming majority of parents. One typical parental comment states, 'The school creates a warm, safe, welcoming and stimulating environment.' Pupils are confident that if they have a problem or need to raise a concern there is an adult who will listen and that effective action will quickly be taken. Pupils appreciate the need for a healthy lifestyle and are keen to participate in physical activity during school time and after school. Their contribution to the school and to the wider community is outstanding. One example is the very effective school council and other pupil groups, including the sustainability working party and the friends' society. The school council acts on issues that are of concern to pupils and was instrumental in the consultations leading to a new security fence being erected.

Although most pupils are keen to come to school and attend regularly, there are too many who have not yet responded to the school's strong encouragement for them to attend more frequently. These pupils need to understand the importance of regular attendance. The school has many strategies in place to tackle this, including working

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with the local authority and other agencies to reduce any unnecessary absence from school. As a result, attendance has improved over the past year, although figures remain below the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. They know the distinction between right and wrong and work cooperatively in lessons and beyond. Pupils are respectful to others and are keen to support charitable causes. Cultural diversity is promoted through links with schools in the local area and e-twinning links are being developed with schools across Europe. Pupils apply their basic skills satisfactorily in a variety of contexts and this equips them well for their future life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good, but the use of a range of strategies to encourage pupils to become confident and skilful writers is less evident. Resources to stimulate learning are used well. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to act as a resource for each other, for example, through discussion in pairs to help to develop each other's thinking and through the use of peer

<sup>1</sup> 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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assessment where pupils comment on each other's work. In some lessons, too much emphasis is put on whole-class teaching with opportunities being missed to ensure that all pupils are fully involved in activities and this affects their rate of learning. This is especially true for the more able pupils, where work is sometimes not well matched to their abilities.

The use of assessment is satisfactory overall. The school holds considerable good quality information about pupils' learning, their personal development and the standards they attain and uses this information effectively. Pupils' work is regularly marked, although there is not a sufficiently sharp focus in teachers' marking throughout the school on what pupils need to do in order to attain the next level in their learning.

The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well and provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result of an emphasis over time by the school to develop the curriculum, effective links between subjects are now in place which are relevant to pupils' interests and this is enthusing them in their learning. The range of enrichment activities, within the curriculum and beyond, is good. For example, pupils refer to their excitement in the number of clubs that are on offer and their involvement in activities such as the 'Not the Eurovision Song Contest'. They say that this reflects the many opportunities they have to learn as a result of the interesting activities they are asked to do. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning across the curriculum.

Parents, carers and pupils appreciate the excellent quality of the care, guidance and support provided by the school. Close monitoring of pupils' personal development and well-being ensures that all pupils are supported to an extremely high standard. Pupils with physical, social and/or emotional needs are provided with suitable support to enable them to access the curriculum and to continue their learning in school. Links with services to support pupils whose circumstances have made them vulnerable are excellent. Transition arrangements between all key stages are effective and pupils are provided with high quality guidance and support to prepare them for the next stages in their education.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Led by the headteacher, management and leadership roles have been developed over recent years and the aspirations of staff are now high. Leaders and managers at all

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levels embed ambition and drive improvement well. The whole-school systems that have been developed and updated have supported this. For example, the effective and robust tracking and target-setting systems have been refined to enable the school to accurately evaluate the quality of provision over time and demonstrate more clearly the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils. Teaching quality is monitored well throughout the school, with a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. All staff are held to account for their performance and receive appropriate training and professional development. Staff and pupils all work together very well and share a common vision to continue to improve. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well.

Systems for safeguarding and risk assessment are outstanding. Highly effective communication within the school and with support agencies ensure pupils are safe and feel very secure. The governing body asks challenging questions about the school's performance and supports it well. Parents' views are sought and their responses are acted upon and governors are committed to ensuring continuing improvements in achievement. Equality is promoted well and discrimination is tackled effectively.

The effectiveness of partnership work is good: involvement with other schools, with parents and with other agencies and external bodies ensures that there are suitable opportunities to promote the pupils' learning and well-being. The school's promotion of community cohesion embraces the celebration of other cultures and faiths of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, enabling pupils to recognise distinctions and common features between them and others. Outcomes for pupils are good and resources are used effectively, with the result that value for money is good.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>



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## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are, overall, slightly below those typically expected for their age. The children make good progress thanks to the good quality of the provision, so that by the time they enter Year 1, most children have attained the knowledge and skills expected for their age. The school works hard to build links with parents and carers and children receive the individual attention they need from the start. Any additional needs are quickly identified and the necessary specialist help is provided. All children are able to access a wide range of experiences that develop their skills and abilities well. They quickly become secure and happy and their confidence, motivation and skills all grow as a result. Children's abilities to work both in groups and independently generally develop well, and by the end of Reception many have gained much improved concentration and perseverance.

The curriculum meets children's needs well. There is a good range of well-planned activities and an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. There is an emphasis on developing social skills. Behaviour is good and children learn to share and take turns. Their speaking skills are also given priority and staff take every opportunity to stimulate children's imagination and to enhance their vocabulary. The outdoor area is limited but best use is made of the space available. Children's welfare is given a high priority and staff ensure that their physical, social and emotional needs are well met. Leadership and management are good. Children's progress is assessed thoroughly and recorded in detail.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school. They appreciate the emphasis given to social and moral development and the strong caring ethos. They strongly support the excellent procedures for safeguarding and comment on how much their children enjoy school. Some expressed that they would like the school to take more account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that comments and views expressed over time had been followed up on by the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St John Fisher 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 201 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	52	20	45	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	70	12	27	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	24	55	20	45	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	57	18	41	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	55	18	41	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	20	45	20	45	2	5	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)	20	45	23	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	50	20	45	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	66	13	30	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	43	18	41	5	11	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	50	18	41	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	70	12	27	1	2	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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

I am writing to thank you for being friendly and helpful when the inspectors visited your school. I would particularly like to thank those of you who spoke with inspectors and those who completed the questionnaire.

You go to a good school with some parts that are outstanding. We were really pleased with your excellent behaviour, the lovely welcome that you gave us and the way you get on so well with each other and with adults. Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and the learning that takes place. You say you feel extremely safe and that the school looks after you very well. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress. Your school council and other pupil groups work hard to make your school an even better place for you to learn and have fun and you work very well together in teams.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- help to improve your work in writing, so that it is at least as good as your work in reading and mathematics
- to make it clearer through the marking of your work how you can improve
- to make sure that those of you who find learning easier are given more opportunities to work at a faster pace and that you have more difficult work to do to help you learn more.

You can all do your part by attending school every day and arriving on time.

Every good wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

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