

St Monica's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106356
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	336662
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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	334
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Terry Dobson
Headteacher	Mr Paul Tyrrell
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
School address	Woodsend Road South Flixton Urmston M41 6QB
Telephone number	0161 748 3353
Fax number	0161 747 7860
Email address	stmonicas.admin@trafford.gov.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Inspection number	336662

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 15 lessons or part-lessons and 13 teachers were observed. The inspectors held discussions with staff, groups of pupils, governors and with parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, including a review of improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, records demonstrating arrangements for safeguarding and a sample of pupils' work. The inspectors analysed 167 questionnaires from parents and carers, 68 questionnaires from pupils and 13 from staff.

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

- the rate of progress between Years 3 to 6, particularly in writing and mathematics and of the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2
- the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- how well teachers use assessment information to plan work that effectively matches pupils' varying abilities and how well pupils are informed of what they need to do to improve and reach their learning targets
- how effectively leaders contribute to evaluating the school's performance information and how this informs their self-evaluation and plans for improvement.

Information about the school

This school is larger than average size. Almost all of the pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals are below average, although in recent times have both been increasing. Provision is made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. About 25% of children who are in the Reception class have not attended the Nursery. Pupils are taught in a mix of single- and mixed-age classes. The school has been accredited with a number of awards, which include the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark and Healthy Schools Status.

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 Monica's is a good school. It has some outstanding features. The exceptional way in which each child is cared for and nurtured, for example, reflects the real warmth and care that radiates from everyone. This stems directly from the dedicated leadership of the headteacher. Parents and carers say that this school is the 'mainstay of [their] children's lives'. In this very harmonious, friendly, safe and welcoming setting, pupils develop remarkable personal qualities, show wonderful attitudes to learning and behave impeccably. They are consistently polite and courteous and show the utmost respect to adults and to one another. Pupils agree that they feel totally safe.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, after this successful start, continue to learn well until the end of Year 6. In recent years attainment by the end of Year 6 has been rising and is now significantly above average. Between Years 3 to 6, although progress is good, it is uneven. In lessons where teachers make particularly good use of assessment information to provide well-matched activities and to direct their questions so that pupils are challenged, learning moves forward at a good and, in some cases, outstanding rate. Older pupils are very clear about what they need to do to reach their challenging learning targets. As a result, the proportion of Year 6 pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is much greater than expected nationally. Although a good range of support programmes for pupils whose learning needs a boost are provided in some year groups, those provided for pupils between Years 3 and 5 are less effective than others.

Leaders and managers work seamlessly together to drive forward improvement. Senior leaders have evaluated accurately the school's performance, recognising its strengths and tackling areas needing attention. Their successes are highly evident, such as in addressing areas for improvement highlighted in the previous inspection report, in promoting pupils' higher attainment and in ensuring pupils' outstanding outcomes. These, along with shrewd financial management, are reasons why this school provides outstanding value for money and demonstrates that there is a good capacity to continue to improve. Recent adaptations to the way in which leaders review pupils' performance, along with the setting of more challenging targets for pupils' progress, are helping to pinpoint any variances in performance more swiftly. Leaders are well aware that their next steps are to improve their analysis of such information and use it to inform their self-evaluation, the agenda for the school's improvement and monitoring activities even more precisely.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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

- Ensure that pupils between Years 3 and 6 make consistently good progress by:
 - improving teachers' use of assessment information to plan and provide challenging activities and to tailor questions that match pupils' varying abilities
 - extend the range of support programmes for those pupils in Years 3 to 5 whose learning needs a boost
 - making sure that all pupils are clear about their precise learning targets and what they have to do to reach them.
- Improve the effectiveness with which the information about pupils' performance is collated and analysed, in order to inform more precisely the school's self-evaluation, improvement planning and monitoring activities.

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

Achievement is good. In lessons pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are very attentive, keen to learn and respond enthusiastically to teachers' questions. Pupils work at a good pace, both when working independently or collaboratively. Their sustained concentration enables them to produce work of a very good standard.

Attainment is on a rising trend. Results from national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2009, for example, were the highest in five years. In English, attainment was higher in reading than in writing, both in Year 2 and Year 6. Efforts to close this gap are paying dividends and, as a result, current attainment is higher, particularly the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 in Year 2 and Level 5 in Year 6. Although pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good overall progress, between Years 3 and 6 it is uneven. Learning accelerates in Year 6, reflecting the strength of the quality of provision.

Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in their consistently excellent attendance and the enthusiasm with which they participate in school life. Pupils are very proud to be part of their wonderful school community. They relish opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example as school councillors or 'playground pals'. Opportunities for pupils to mix with others from ethnically diverse groups within British society are still developing. Pupils participate in a tremendous range of fundraising activities, supporting both charities locally, such as the St Joseph's Penny, and further afield. They are acutely aware of the impact they can have on helping others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils talk impressively about how to keep safe. They show their maturity by encouraging one another to act safely and responsibly and are extremely confident there is always someone on hand to help them if they feel worried. Pupils show their confidence in the ease with which they discuss their learning together, with adults and visitors, and in their mature and sensible approach to working both independently and collaboratively. These factors, along with their high attainment, demonstrate that they are very well placed to become successful adults of tomorrow.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers' enthusiasm, good organisation, highly positive relationships with pupils and effective use of praise all make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. In outstanding lessons teachers' high expectations of the pace of learning, along with very well-tailored individual questions and the provision of exciting activities that challenge thinking, ensure that pupils are continually kept on their toes.

Since the previous inspection, successful adaptations to the curriculum are helping to raise pupils' attainment in writing. Good use is made of new resources for information and communication technology (ICT), such as laptops and interactive whiteboards. Older, more-able pupils take part in a good range of additional activities to challenge their thinking, such as working with teachers from a nearby secondary school. One-to-one tuition during Year 6 enables those pupils whose learning needs an extra boost to reach the nationally expected levels. The range of support programmes for such pupils between Years 3 and 5, however, are underdeveloped.

Making sure that every child is nurtured and cared for is at the very heart of the school. Extremely high quality pastoral support is evident in day-to-day practice. Parents and carers praise the total dedication and commitment of staff. There are good partnerships fostered with parents and carers. Along with the excellent links with external support agencies, they help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be confident and gain in their self-esteem.

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

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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?

A strong emphasis is placed on the inclusion of all pupils in everything the school has to offer. Pupils' welfare, for example, is kept in firm view and permeates school life. Concerted efforts to promote equality of opportunity have helped to bring about improvement in achievement, such as for the more able pupils. Safeguarding procedures are good and meet current requirements, contributing to the confidence that parents and carers have in the very high quality of care. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Very effective links are established within the local community and parish. Extending opportunities for pupils to engage with ethnically diverse groups farther afield are developing well.

Everyone agrees that the headteacher, who is to retire at the end of this term, is 'a great leader', is 'instrumental in making sure pupils feel valued and cared for' and that he 'lives and breathes the school'. In partnership, staff, governors, parents and carers work well together to promote the school's improvement. The Parent Association, for example, raises significant funds which, in recent years have contributed to the purchase of additional ICT equipment. Governors are very supportive and are managing well the changes currently occurring in leadership and management.

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	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 with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Nursery, their skills are usually broadly typical for their age. In recent years, the proportion of children starting with skills at levels below those expected has been increasing, particularly in aspects of their communication and numeracy skills. There are exceptionally warm and caring relationships between adults and children. Together with the vibrant, lively and inspiring learning environment, particularly in the Nursery, and the exciting theme-based activities, such as 'rainforests and space', this ensures that children quickly develop a real thirst and joy for learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is outstanding. Adults actively encourage children to take on responsibilities, for example as 'helping hands', to understand routines and boundaries and to consider how they can keep themselves safe. As a result, they quickly become eager and confident young people who behave extremely well. Adults work well together to assess children's progress. They record children's achievements carefully and plan the future based on this knowledge. Learning, therefore, builds effectively on what children can already do. Occasionally, children's progress slows when they learn together as a whole group directed by their class teacher. Even so, children make good progress and, as a result, by the time they start Year 1 the proportion of children that have reached or exceeded their learning goals is higher than expected nationally. Children's good progress reflects effective leadership and management. Leaders are now focusing, correctly, on extending the range of opportunities for learning outdoors for children in the Reception classes and how adults analyse the information collected about children's progress.

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

A particularly high proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires to inspectors. These parents and carers, along with those who talked with inspectors, confirm their overwhelming support of the school. They say for example, that in the Nursery, they 'couldn't ask for a better start to [their] children's education', and that

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

'staff go above and beyond their duties to ensure [their] children are supported and encouraged'. A very small minority of parents and carers suggested that there remains scope to extend the number and range of clubs and after-school activities offered. Inspectors agree, particularly for Years 1 and 2. A small minority of parents and carers also indicated that they do not always feel well informed about their children's achievements and about school life. Inspectors found arrangements for communicating with parents and carers, such as through consultation evenings and through written annual reports, to be good. The recent launch of the school's website has strengthened communication channels even further.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Monica's RC 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 167 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 334 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	75	40	24	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	130	78	33	20	4	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	93	56	64	38	6	4	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	56	61	37	7	4	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	103	62	60	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	95	57	61	37	9	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	83	50	82	49	1	1	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)	83	50	66	40	10	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	101	60	58	35	5	3	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	88	53	63	38	12	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	76	46	80	48	6	4	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	101	60	59	35	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	115	69	47	28	1	1	3	2

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.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Monica's RC Primary School, Manchester, M41 6QB

Thank you so much for the extremely warm and friendly welcome you gave the team when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed being part of your wonderful school community and finding out your views. I am writing to let you know what we thought. You go to a good school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6 the standards that you reach are much higher than those expected and you make good progress. We were particularly pleased to:

- see your excellent behaviour and wonderful attitudes to learning
- hear how very safe you feel and how you keep one another safe
- hear you sing so joyfully, yet sensitively, in hymn practice
- see just how much you know about how important it is to help those who are not as fortunate as yourselves, both nearby and around the world.

These are some of the reasons why you are prepared well for going to secondary school. So that your school becomes even better, we have asked that some further improvements be made. These are to make sure that:

- between Years 3 and 6 you all learn equally well by giving some of you in Years 3 to 5 more help from adults when you are finding your learning difficult
- you are all clear about what your targets are and what you still have to do to reach them
- adults improve the way in which they check how well you are getting on so that they can decide how things might get even better for you.

You can help by making sure that you tell your teacher if your work is too hard, or too easy and by always checking what you still have to do to reach your learning targets. I send my very best wishes to you all for a very bright and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathryn Dodd

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.