



# St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School, Radcliffe

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105353  
**LEA** Bury  
**Inspection number** 282699  
**Inspection dates** 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr John Coleman HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Belgrave Street Radcliffe Manchester, Lancashire M26 4DG
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 723 4210
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 724 6017
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Iris Turner
<b>Number on roll</b>	388	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Paul Heaton
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body		
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 September 2003		

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 11 January 2006 - 12 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282699
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary School is located in Radcliffe four miles from the centre of Bury. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and enter the school with levels of attainment that are average overall. St Mary's is a two form entry school and currently has 388 pupils on roll aged from three to eleven years, including 50 pupils in the nursery. The number of children receiving free school meals is 11.9% which is about the national average. The vast majority of pupils have English as their first language. Over 18 % of pupils have additional learning needs, which is around the national average, of which 1.6% have a statement of special educational need which is below the national average. The number of pupils leaving or joining the school, other than at the beginning and end of the primary school ages, is about the same as that found in most schools.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school's self-evaluation, confirmed by inspection findings, is that this is a good school that provides good value for money. Serious weaknesses identified at the last inspection are no longer present.

Overall, good leadership by the headteacher and the governors, is achieving improvements in the standards of education. By the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average, and given an average level of skills with which most pupils enter the school, this represents good progress. The quality of teaching is mainly good and the school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The school is particularly successful in creating an ethos built upon respect and consideration for all. As yet, subject leaders are not able to inform the strategic leadership and improvement planning of the school. Assessment systems across the school are not yet unified in a way which effectively informs teachers' planning. Pupils with additional learning needs make particularly good progress because of the good support they receive. The highest attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they could in Key Stage 2, and this is identified in the school's action plans for improvement. Pupils are happy coming to school; behaviour is good, they are polite, courteous and well meaning towards each other. The very good role models provided by all staff in the school are a strong contributory factor. Pupils are very aware of their own, and others health and safety, because the school works hard to promote their awareness.

The quality of education offered in the Foundation Stage is good. Factors which contribute to this are good teaching, very good personal development and a high emphasis given to developing each pupil's independence.

Since the last inspection the school has acted successfully to improve areas identified by the report. Teaching is now largely of good quality, standards have risen and governors are more involved in the school.

The school leadership is well placed to bring about further improvements.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Clearly define the role and function of subject leaders to ensure their full contribution to school improvement planning.
- Unite and embed the systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of pupils across the curriculum, in order that teachers may plan more effectively for the next steps in pupils' learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school evaluations show, and inspectors agree, that the progress made by most pupils is good.

The majority of pupils enter school with skills which are similar to those expected nationally. They make good progress overall in the nursery and Reception classes. This is particularly so for social and personal development, the ability to work and play independently and communication skills. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with those found nationally.

Standards attained by pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 are good overall, but are below average in writing. By the age of seven, standards are above average in reading and mathematics, and are satisfactory in writing. More able pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well. By the age of eleven, standards in mathematics and science are above average. However, standards in writing are below average and in reading above average. Pupils with the highest ability achieve satisfactorily but their prior attainment suggests they should achieve even higher standards. Most pupils meet the targets set for them.

The progress that pupils make shows a sustained level of improvement over three years. School targets for future pupil performance indicate higher standards of attainment and inspectors judge these to be accurate and realistic.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Personal development, pupils' well-being and attendance are good. Pupils' personal and social skills steadily improve. Good relationships promote a culture of trust and confidence that reflects the school's Catholic Christian ethos. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Relationships between pupils are positive and pupils' attitudes towards staff are respectful and friendly. The school effectively nurtures a positive climate for learning well by celebrating and rewarding achievement. Bullying and racism are rare. Pupils agree that when they do occur, they are dealt with quickly. They say, 'Our teachers listen to our problems and look after us all properly'. Opportunities to take responsibility and to contribute to the school community are satisfactory. Pupils recognise their responsibilities as citizens and members of their community, such as through their work to help with the improvements to the school environment. The school council takes an active lead in such work, setting good role models for other pupils in the conduct of their business, their co-operation with adults and forging good links with other local school pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupil achievement is celebrated and rewarded in lessons, displays and assemblies. Understanding of world religions and cultures is fostered through lessons and displays. The school's programme for promoting healthy lifestyles is good and remains a school improvement focus.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching and learning are good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners who enjoy their lessons in the bright, stimulating

classrooms, and behave very well. In the good teaching seen, the teachers showed secure subject knowledge and used a variety of teaching styles to engage and motivate their pupils. The work set was appropriate and challenging for learners of all abilities and all made good progress. Lessons moved along with pace and reflected the teacher's high expectations, as in a Year 5 science lesson about gasses, where all pupils combined good understanding and application of scientific principles with imagination and inventiveness in their testing of ideas. The best lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and resources are used well. Pupils work well in teams and are encouraged to develop independent learning skills from an early age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well provided for and supported.

In some lessons, though other elements are good, pupils' progress is impeded because planning is not appropriate to the needs of all pupils. In others, learning objectives were absent or unsuitable, or resources were used ineffectively. Pupils' work is marked and assessed regularly, but assessment systems across the school are not yet unified and consistent.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced, matches the needs of individual pupils and meets statutory requirements. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. The emphasis on raising standards in core subjects since the last inspection is well justified, and the school is well placed to further increase opportunities for pupil enrichment within the curriculum. More innovations such as the whole school history and African Weeks, along with other year group work on themes that combine a number of subjects, would effectively provide the necessary increase in new and exciting learning experiences for all pupils. There are interesting visitors and visits, and a range of extra-curricular activities, particularly for older pupils. The school does not utilise the particular skills and expertise of its staff sufficiently well, and the involvement of outside individuals and organisations to improve the learning experiences of its pupils could be developed further.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school takes good care of all its pupils within a warm and welcoming environment. Pupils feel safe and respected, and have many sympathetic and skilled adults that they can turn to instantly for help when they are upset or troubled. Child Protection arrangements are satisfactory and risk assessments are carried out regularly and thoroughly. The good links between home and school have improved further since the last inspection, in ways such as the introduction of home visits by Nursery staff as part of the induction of new children. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very well provided for. They are well supported by caring staff and good use is made of individual education plans to set work. Parents, pupils and the appropriate

outside agencies are all involved and consulted and the special needs co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management.

The school's arrangements for pupil assessment, tracking and target setting lack formal agreement and consistent application across the school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The school judges leadership and management to be good and inspectors agree. The headteacher is instrumental in bringing about sustained improvements to the issues raised at the last inspection. He has managed changes to staffing with respect and consideration, whilst maintaining a sharp focus upon raising standards. Responses from parents overwhelmingly support the positive impact of the headteacher.

The staff are highly committed and the leadership team is aware of the school's strengths and areas where it needs to improve. The judgements of the inspection team were closely matched to those of the school itself. The role and function of subject leaders lacks structure and consistency. The school's monitoring and evaluation systems need to be formalised and make more rigorous use of assessment information to improve outcomes for learners. The management team are aware of the need to continue pursuing this and thereby achieve greater consistency in the quality of teaching and learning.

The governors are well informed and knowledgeable about the school; they successfully challenge the school leadership where appropriate and provide effective support in their strategic role. Resources are well deployed and the recruitment and retention of staff are well managed. There is a good partnership with the Local Authority who provide school improvement support. The outcomes of their monitoring visits have been used very effectively to inform action plans to raise standards.

Improvement since the last inspection is good, the quality of teaching is now mainly good, governors are better involved, and standards overall and across subjects are good. The school gives good value for money. The capacity of the school for further improvement is good.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we visited your school last week to find out if it is giving you the education you should receive. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for being so helpful when we asked you questions. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the things you enjoy doing.

We think your school does most things very well, and some of the things you learn are particularly exciting. We have found a few things, which we think would make your learning even better. The things we particularly like are:

- everyone is very friendly and helpful and so your school it is a happy place to be
- your teachers help you to do well in lessons and so you learn quickly
- you said your teachers make most lessons interesting and enjoyable, and we agree
- when you are given jobs to do, you carry them out very sensibly
- the school cares for everyone and makes sure you are safe
- the Pupil Council has some good ideas to make your school better.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn:

- we want the tasks teachers give you to make you work really hard, particularly if you are good at something
- we have asked your teachers to make sure that all lessons are as interesting as the best ones
- when your teachers find out what works well at your school and what needs to improve, we want them to use the information to help you get better with your work.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. Please share this letter with the other children. We all hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers to make St Mary's Catholic Primary School a good place to be.