



# St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105534  
**Local Authority** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 287252  
**Inspection dates** 8–9 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Peter Jones

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 address</b>	Clare Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Levenshulme, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire M19 2QW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2245995
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	323	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2570026
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs R Campion
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Cunliffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is a large primary school serving a community of varied social and economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, though the school does have a growing number of pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, some of whom have English as an additional language. The school holds the prestigious Activemark award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides good value for money and has improved well since the last inspection. In view of its good track record of successful pupil achievement and the improvements made in its leadership and management, it has good capacity to improve in the future. The school's mission statement is proudly displayed in classrooms, corridors and on school documents. It speaks of 'fostering with care and compassion, spiritual, personal and academic growth', and of 'developing a partnership between pupils, teachers and parents'. It succeeds well in its aims. The quality of the relationships between all members of the school community is central to its effectiveness. Pupils really enjoy school, as shown by their enthusiasm in lessons and their involvement in out-of-school activities. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's efforts and the additional facilities it provides, such as the before- and after-school care. Pupils feel safe and well cared for; they show respect and kindness to those around them. They are involved with their local community and have forged close links with schools in Africa and Latin America. The school promotes healthy lifestyles through its programme of physical education and healthy eating. The consistent good achievement of pupils contributes strongly to their future economic well-being.

The school has succeeded in improving the quality of teaching and learning. This has had particular impact in Key Stage 1 where results had dipped since the last inspection. Results have recovered and are now closer to national standards. By age 11, pupils have made good progress and consistently reach standards above national averages. There is good provision in the Foundation Stage. The youngest pupils enjoy their activities and develop a wide range of skills that prepare them well for their future learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and are well supported both by teachers and by teaching assistants throughout the school. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, teachers do not always provide them with sufficient guidance about how to improve their work, and this hinders their progress. Also, the school does not make best use of the opportunities available through information and communication technology (ICT) to improve the skills and learning experiences of its pupils.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher shows tireless devotion in his promotion of the school's mission statement and he is an excellent role model for staff and pupils. He is well supported by the local authority and the very capable governing body. The recent restructure of the senior management has brought a fresh energy and sharpness to the school's work that has resulted in improved standards and progress. Data are gathered effectively but are not always used well enough to set clear and challenging targets for pupils to maximise their progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils are fully aware of how they are performing and what they need to do to improve their standards.

- Improve the use of ICT in all areas of the curriculum to enhance the learning experiences of pupils, with the aim of raising their standards and progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enter the school with skills expected for their age and make good progress in the Foundation Stage due to skilful teaching. Since the previous inspection, standards and progress in Key Stage 1 have declined. However, the picture is improving. Standards at age 7 are close to national averages and pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is now satisfactory. This is largely as a result of effective action by the school that has improved the quality of teaching and learning. It has also implemented a successful programme that is impacting on standards of writing and speaking and listening, and on the performance of boys in national tests. The picture in Key Stage 2 is brighter, with pupils consistently making good progress to reach standards that are above national averages by age 11. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do the small but growing numbers of pupils with English as an additional language, thanks to the focused and effective support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, inspired by the school's mission statement, is good overall and has some outstanding features. The behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary. They are well mannered and polite, and treat each other and the adults around them with courtesy and respect. Pupils feel safe and their enjoyment of lessons and school life is exceptional. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, with pupils using the regular opportunities provided for reflection to guide their behaviour, actions and relationship with others. One pupil commented, 'I think of everyone in the school as part of my family'. Pupils see everyone as of equal value and those from different ethnic backgrounds work and play happily together. Some pupils make a valuable contribution to their community through involvement in the school council and as prefects. The whole school is involved with the wider community through the regular contributions to charities and links with communities in the developing world. Attendance is satisfactory and broadly in line with the national average. Pupils are aware of the need to make good food choices to have a healthy lifestyle, and many also take advantage of the sporting opportunities offered by the school. Pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy prepare them well for their working lives in the future, but they have too few opportunities to develop their ICT skills.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding teaching observed. The school's drive to improve this area, particularly in Key Stage 1, is beginning to have a positive impact. The quality of teaching and support received by pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. The teaching and support staff form strong partnerships and they ensure that through joint and detailed planning, continuity of the curriculum is maintained. Lessons have clear learning objectives and are delivered at a good pace that helps pupils to remain focused on their learning. Activities are planned to cater for pupils' individual needs as well as challenging them, and this results in pupils making good progress. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils with particular needs, helping them to be fully involved in their lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils in terms of both their behaviour and their learning. Pupils pay close attention to their lessons and concentrate well when working.

Good quality questioning in classes ensures that pupils' understanding is regularly assessed and that pupils are fully involved in their learning.

Marking of pupils' work is carried out regularly and gives positive feedback, but teachers do not consistently inform pupils of the next steps to take in their learning.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets the needs of its pupils. The personal, social, health education and citizenship curriculum supports the hard work and time the school has invested in creating a caring, calm and Catholic environment. The school is seeking to improve links between subjects with themed activities such as the Health and Fitness Day. It does not use ICT sufficiently well to provide all pupils with a wider range of stimulating and effective opportunities to extend the scope of their learning. The school offers its pupils a wide range of extra activities that enrich its curriculum well. Pupils particularly enjoy judo, music, sport and story clubs, all of which are well attended. The annual residential visit focuses well on encouraging pupils to work well together and share their experiences.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for in this school. The school is fully committed to its caring aims that emanate from the headteacher and permeate the school. The comment of one parent represents the feeling of many when she said, 'the staff are dedicated and committed to the children's mental, physical, and spiritual well-being'. Measures are taken to ensure that the safety of the children is regularly reviewed and child protection procedures are in place. Pupils comment that they feel safe in school and this is partly

due to the care shown to them by other pupils. Although pupils are guided well in lessons, they are not always provided with learning targets and the next steps to learning in their books. Parents are well informed about their children's progress and this helps them to work with the school to improve learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of leadership and management is good. The inspirational and dedicated headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Together with the assistance of the active governing body and the supportive local authority, he has introduced a new management structure. This is successfully driving through strategies that have led to the recent improvements in pupils' achievement. The monitoring of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science at senior management level is rigorous. The effective involvement of subject coordinators in this area, an issue at the last inspection, has also been improved and their work is beginning to have greater impact on standards and progress. The school gathers and analyses data effectively, but this is not always used precisely enough to inform target setting and the tracking of pupils' progress. The school's self-evaluation is accurate, and it has a clear picture of its strengths and areas for development. Its planning for the future is rooted in raising standards and improving the educational experiences of all its pupils. The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. It is well managed and led by experienced and knowledgeable staff who provide a clear direction. The governing body is supportive, enthusiastic and is well led by the knowledgeable chairperson. It has very good understanding of the issues facing the school and has been proactive both in planning improvements and in carrying out its role as a critical friend.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Thank you for being so friendly and for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that are happening in your school.

The best things about your school are:

- you like coming to school and everyone gets along very well together
- your school council and prefects do a great deal for you and the school
- teachers and classroom assistants work hard to help you to learn
- your behaviour is excellent and you work hard
- the school keeps you safe and happy and you care about each other
- we know that you enjoy the extra-curricular and sports and music activities, and your residential visits. Your Gaelic football team is hard to beat!

What your school needs to do next to make it even better:

- we would like your teachers to give you more helpful comments when they mark your work to help you improve
- we have asked your teachers to use ICT in more of your lessons to help you improve your knowledge and skills.

We appreciated talking to you and watching you learn. Well done. You should be proud of yourselves and your school. We wish you well for the future.