

# St Boniface RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105962
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	308995
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ann Welch

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	221
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr P Kinsella
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Morley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 October 2003
<b>School address</b>	Yew Street Salford Lancashire M7 2HL
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7925659
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7088670

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is slightly smaller than the average primary school. It serves an inner city area of social and economic need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above that found nationally. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. A smaller than average proportion speak English as an additional language. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark Gold, Artsmark Gold and the National Healthy Schools Awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The attention paid to pupils' individual needs is excellent and promotes outstanding achievement in both their academic and personal development. The school's inclusive, caring and Christian ethos is at the heart of promoting pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Parents are understandably pleased with the quality of education provided for their children. 'The school has very high standards in education and discipline, teachers are approachable and fair, rewarding good behaviour and instilling respect for others in everyday life,' is a view held by many parents.

Most children start school with skills that are well below national expectations and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. The most recent results confirm an upward trend, especially in science. This represents excellent achievement by the pupils during their time at St Boniface. Everyone in the school plays their part in this success. Teaching and learning are outstanding. Very good relationships result in pupils working hard and feeling valued by staff and each other. They take a pride in their work and consistently do their best. These positive attitudes feed into pupils' exceptional personal development and contribute to their willingness to become increasingly responsible, for example, for their own health and safety. The highly skilled learning support assistants do a superb job supporting the rising population of pupils who speak English as an additional language as well as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

An outstanding curriculum includes a wealth of events and visits that make school life an enjoyable and exciting experience. Pupils are particularly motivated by the themed weeks which give them a chance to work in practical and creative ways. During 'World Faiths Week', visitors shared their expertise and beliefs so that pupils are fully aware of the richness of cultures and religions different from their own. The excellent care, guidance and support for pupils play a huge part in their very effective learning and personal development. Pupils have complete trust in the adults to look after them and sort out any problems. Behaviour is exemplary. Members of staff with particular expertise in behaviour management are having a positive effect on the few pupils with difficulties and help them to handle their emotions well. All pupils have challenging yet realistic targets and their progress is monitored rigorously.

All of this is masterminded by a headteacher who has the charisma and expertise to inspire and bring out the best in both adults and pupils. He is very ably supported by the assistant headteachers and other staff. Excellent monitoring and evaluation procedures enable the school to determine how well it is doing and guide improvement. The governing body has a good range of skills and plays an active part in determining the school's improvement targets. Although a first-rate school, there is no resting on laurels here: the staff are neither complacent nor content to stand still. This ensures an outstanding capacity to improve. The school gives excellent value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children flourish in the stimulating Foundation Stage environment. From a low starting point they achieve exceptionally well, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in language and communication skills, because staff are very skilled at incorporating these

areas of development across the curriculum. As a result, most are working securely within the expected learning goals by the end of the Reception Year.

Parents are very appreciative of the way the school helps children to settle so easily. They find that the opportunities to visit during the preceding term really help children to adjust very well to such an important change in their lives. Children's confidence and self-esteem improve rapidly because all staff value them as individuals and listen to their ideas. They develop extremely positive attitudes to learning because it is made so enjoyable. Excellent relationships ensure that the Foundation Stage is a great place to be. The staff's very clear knowledge of the requirements of teaching young children is very effective in all areas of the curriculum. A particular strength is the way that planning allows for a perfect balance between adult-guided and child-selected activities.

The vibrancy of the Foundation Stage curriculum engenders a strong desire to learn. Excellent use is made of the indoor and outdoor environments and enticing resources are provided. The routines and rhythms of the day ensure that children feel secure and develop independence. Staff make excellent use of the comprehensive assessment system to guide children on to the next steps in their learning. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding. The coordinator leads a talented team who are united in their determination to give every child the best possible start to their education.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- This outstanding school has an extremely clear view of how it can improve. These improvements are set out in the Evaluation of Improvement Plan and there are no additional measures necessary beyond this plan.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is outstanding and this ensures that pupils, from a well below average starting point, reach national standards by the end of Year 6. Achievement in reading is a strength by the end of Year 2, with standards above the national average. Achievement in writing has not been as strong and was below the national average in 2006. Determined action taken to remedy the situation is already having a positive impact on standards in writing and, in the most recent tests, the number reaching the higher level shows a significant increase.

Similarly, in Years 3 to 6, achievement in writing has not been as strong as for reading. The push to improve this has led to impressive results in the 2007 tests, with all pupils reaching the expected levels and over half reaching the higher levels. Improvements to the provision for mathematics, particularly in terms of investigative mathematics, have produced similar results. Achievement in science has improved year on year, culminating in 2007 when 86% reached the higher level.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who have particular gifts and talents make extremely good progress because they have specially targeted support to match their particular needs.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils really enjoy coming to school. One pupil voiced the views of many as he explained, 'Our teachers are like our friends, they always listen to us and that's why we really want to come.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The respect they have for each other, adults and school property shows how well the school promotes moral values. The system of rewards motivates pupils extremely well, resulting in excellent behaviour around the school. Attendance is in line with the national average and has improved over recent years. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities to develop the social skills of cooperation and teamwork that will stand them in good stead for future employment.

Pupils take pride in their contributions to school development through the school council. The school's efforts in teaching pupils how to stay fit and healthy have earned it the National Healthy Schools Award and the approval of parents.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Throughout the school, stimulating and enthusiastic teaching engages pupils' interest so that they want to learn. Varied activities, many of which are 'hands on', and excellent relationships ensure that pupils behave very well and enjoy their work. Teachers use interactive whiteboards very well to explain difficult concepts and move the lesson on at a fast pace. Information from meticulous assessments of pupils' progress is used very effectively by staff to set challenging lesson objectives and to ensure that activities are planned to meet the particular needs of every pupil. Learning assistants' invaluable support ensures that targeted groups make the same outstanding progress as their classmates.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

Curricular provision is outstanding. Pupils enjoy a varied curriculum that promotes their basic skills very well, as reflected in the Basic Skills Quality Mark award. Provision for information and communication technology has improved and has led the way forward to develop skills across several subjects. The strong emphasis on a creative curriculum has ensured that the quality of art, music and physical education is impressive. The school is understandably proud of its Artsmark Gold and Activemark Gold awards. Very effective provision for personal, social and health education is successful in helping pupils to become responsible members of the community and to respect themselves and others.

The wealth of exciting activities complements an already stimulating curriculum. The wide range of educational visits is very effective because it is linked very well to the topics pupils study. The good number and variety of school clubs attracts many pupils and enables them to develop aesthetic and sporting skills.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Outstanding care is given to pupils. They say they feel very safe and happy and express high levels of trust in the adults who care for them. They know there is always someone to talk with and say that the support provided really works. Child protection procedures are in place and the school meets the latest guidelines on safeguarding pupils. Academic progress is tracked thoroughly, therefore quickly identifying any who need extra support. To this end, the school has developed very strong links with the agencies who work to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. Targets in English, mathematics and science motivate pupils well. As one commented, 'They give us confidence to do well and the best we can do.' Marking has improved since the previous inspection and gives pupils very effective advice on how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

The headteacher sets exactly the right direction for the school and inspires others to follow. He has high expectations of what pupils can achieve, academically and pastorally, despite their low starting point. All staff share this vision and achieve great success in bringing it about. The Evaluation of Improvement Plan is very comprehensive and is an excellent example of the school showing how well it knows itself and what it must do next.

Professional development is given a high priority. Rigorous checks are made on the quality of teaching and learning and professional development is closely linked to these evaluations and to other identified priorities for improvement. The innovative 'Coaching Partnership' in which all staff are involved, has clearly had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Expertise and confidence have increased and staff have a more reflective approach to their work. The governing body is supportive, appropriately challenging and acts as a critical friend to the school. The headteacher provides a strong lead in forging effective partnerships with parents, neighbouring schools and with the local community. All of these enhance pupils' personal development, bring the curriculum to life and promote better teaching.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for giving us such a warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We had a busy two days and enjoyed the chance to talk with some of you about what it is like to be a pupil at St Boniface Roman Catholic Primary School. You gave us lots of reasons why you think your school is special. We agree with you, in fact your school is outstanding. Your teachers are very skilful at planning interesting lessons for you and help you to make very good progress in English, mathematics and science. They also make your work enjoyable. The special themed weeks sound great fun.

The adults in school care for you extremely well and give you outstanding support. We were very impressed by your positive attitudes to learning and these are helping you to succeed. The behaviour we saw in class and around the school was excellent and you care for each other in a very sensitive yet natural way. It was great to see so many smiling faces amongst the children and the adults.

Your headteacher makes a superb job of leading and managing your school. The assistant headteachers are also very good leaders and managers. All the adults work hard to make sure that you do well. We know they will continue to do this but you must play your part too by always doing your best.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see how your school could improve. It is, however, in such good hands that your headteacher and the other adults already know what improvements are needed and are ready to take action.

Thank you once again for making us so welcome, keep up the good work.