

# St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105534
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	336511
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 March 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Onyon

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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	336
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs R Champion
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Cunliffe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Clare Road Levenshulme Manchester M19 2QW
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, spent over 60% of the time looking at learning involving fifteen teachers, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, school assessments, reports from the School Improvement Partner, planning and policies. Inspectors examined 90 questionnaires from parents and carers and questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development
- whether the quality of teaching, including the use of assessment, consistently enables all pupils to do as well as they are able
- whether provision for the more-able and vulnerable pupils enables them to make good progress
- how effectively the school's systems for monitoring and evaluating its work identify and remedy any areas for improvement.

## Information about the school

This larger-than-average-sized school serves an urban community close to the centre of Manchester. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The school serves pupils from a wide range of ethnic heritages and a very small number are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, with a below average proportion with a statement of special educational needs. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has gained Healthy Schools Status and the Activemark 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

This is a good and improving school providing outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils, especially those who are vulnerable. Good teaching and a relevant curriculum have enabled the school to move forward. The staff team work together effectively to provide interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. The school's concerted effort to raise standards further is having a positive effect throughout the school following lower than expected test results at Key Stage 2 in 2008.

Since the last inspection, standards have improved in English, mathematics and science, and the school has sustained a number of good features. This track record of improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team provide. Through rigorous self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development. It plans carefully to address these issues. It demonstrates a commitment to developing staff by sharing good practice and through their involvement in monitoring and evaluating progress towards agreed priorities. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

Achievement is good because pupils make good progress in their learning throughout the school and in their lessons. The school responded well to a drop in standards, with much improved outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils throughout the school are on track to sustain a similar level of performance. Standards in English, mathematics and science are average. Most pupils make good progress, from below expected levels on entry, because the teaching is responsive to their needs and interests. The more-able pupils are not consistently offered a good level of challenge in their work to enable them to reach the higher levels. Where teaching is best pupils respond well to clear expectations and lively activities. They learn quickly in lessons through discussion and focused tasks. Learning slows, for the more able, when the tasks are less relevant to their interests.

Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school has started to promote community cohesion more actively, to ensure that pupils have opportunities to mix with others from different backgrounds, but has not yet developed a comprehensive plan based on a detailed analysis of the needs of the school population. The excellent quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils has a very positive effect on their personal development. Pupils conduct themselves well, in and around the school, and understand important health and safety issues.

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

- Improve the progress made by the more-able pupils to raise overall standards by:

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- ensuring that a good level of challenge is provided in every lesson
- making tasks more relevant to their particular interests
- ensuring more pupils reach the higher national curriculum levels.
- Establish a clear plan to promote community cohesion by:
  - developing a more detailed analysis of the school community and its needs
  - evaluating the impact on learning of the opportunities the school gives pupils to mix and communicate with those from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' achievement is good overall due to the good teaching they receive. Good learning is seen in those lessons where teachers effectively use assessment information to plan suitable activities that enthuse and motivate pupils of differing abilities. Pupils concentrate well and work hard. Well-planned opportunities enable them to participate eagerly. Particularly good learning was seen, for example, in Year 6. Pupils were able to identify the properties of positive and negative numbers through investigation and discussion with well-focused feedback from the teacher. As a result they were well motivated and able to apply their skills in practical situations because of the teacher's skilful questioning techniques and well-chosen resources. In a small minority of lessons, the progress of the more-able pupils is slower when planned activities do not challenge them. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their books shows overall progress is good throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and vulnerable pupils also make good progress and their work in small groups with adult support has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils say they enjoy school and feel safe. They understand why they have to adhere to school rules and say that any concerns they have are taken seriously and dealt with by staff. Behaviour is good in lessons and most pupils demonstrate high standards of conduct. Any instances of inappropriate behaviour are managed very well, sensitively considering the needs of all. Pupils are active at playtimes and engage well in the many sporting activities on offer. They know about eating healthily and the benefits of exercise. Pupils enjoy taking positions of responsibility as members of the school council, as 'prefects' and 'playground pals' and carry out their duties very effectively. Attendance is broadly average and pupils know why they should attend school regularly. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is reflected in their good behaviour and conduct around school and respect for the views of others.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<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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<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>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective is the provision?**

In lessons, relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well. In the best lessons, they ensure the pace of learning is brisk and encourage pupils to talk about their thinking with each other to consolidate ideas. Regular feedback is provided so that all pupils are aware of their success, helping them to move to the next stages of learning. In a minority of lessons learning slows for the more able because tasks do not take account of pupils' interests. The school's rigorous and systematic monitoring of pupils' performance quickly identifies underachievement effectively and high-quality support is provided well for those facing barriers to learning.

The good curriculum focuses well on the development of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. Good attention is paid to pupils' personal development and relationships through the teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning, and in the school's day-to-day routines and procedures. Music and art are promoted well and pupils enjoy learning Spanish. Provision is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are well attended by all groups of pupils. The curriculum meets the needs of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities well.

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The work has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. Close monitoring of progress and well-being ensures all pupils are supported to a very high standard. Vulnerable pupils are extremely well supported; well targeted and sensitive support helps pupils to overcome emotional issues. One-to-one and small group support provided to targeted pupils whose progress

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may be slipping behind that of their peers is also of high quality. Relationships observed during the inspection were respectful and very positive. Links with services to support vulnerable pupils are excellent. Transition arrangements between all key stages are effective and pupils are provided with high-quality guidance and support to prepare them well 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	2
<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?**

The drive for improvement is guided by a clear vision and shared by all staff. The work of the school is kept under constant review. Lessons are observed, assessments are carefully analysed and information is gathered from parents, carers and pupils to identify strengths and weaknesses. Areas to improve are carefully prioritised and challenging targets are set and pursued by phase leaders across the school. These measures resulted in improved standards in all core subjects in 2009, good progress and a continuing rise in standards. Improving attainment and provision is now evident, despite some inconsistencies in the challenge for the more-able pupils.

Governors provide good support. They know the school's areas for development well and are involved in strategic planning. This enables them to hold the school to account effectively. Good partnerships with parents, carers and outside agencies ensure that pupils' well-being is promoted very strongly. Rigorous safeguarding procedures are in place, ensuring the safety and well-being of pupils. A robust equality policy challenges stereotyping, ensures that there is no discrimination and adjusts teaching and the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils from different ethnic groups well. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily although a detailed plan has not been established. Good opportunities provided for pupils to visit other schools, to share experiences and learn about other religions and cultures are not evaluated effectively.

*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>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b> Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

### Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the Nursery Year with skills and knowledge that are below expected levels. By the time they leave the Reception, in response to good-quality teaching, they have made good progress and are close to expected levels in all areas of learning. This represents an improvement on previous cohorts, where standards were not as high. Children are safe, happy and secure in their learning. They behave well and listen carefully to adults. Most work independently with particularly good levels of motivation when, for example, they write out letter sounds and match the sounds to objects in the room.

The indoor learning environment is spacious, well resourced and provides stimulating activities for children to plan their own learning as well as receiving well-focused support from adults. The exciting displays of children's work provide very good stimulation for their imaginative paintings. The recently completed outdoor area is able to be used continuously by children, providing them with challenge and stimulating activity. The practice of 'counting pupils out' and 'counting them back in again' adds to their enjoyment and also to their safety.

Good-quality leadership and management ensure that the team works successfully together to give children a happy and productive time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Good induction procedures with parents and carers help children get a confident start to their school life. Assessment is thorough and used well to extend children's learning.

*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



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## **Views of parents and carers**

A large majority of parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work and its effectiveness. Most agreed that the school keeps children safe. A small minority felt that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Some parents and carers felt that pupils are not making enough progress and that they do not receive enough information about their children's progress. A very small minority felt they needed more help supporting their children's learning and that teaching and leadership and management could be better. Inspectors found that the needs of all pupils are considered very carefully when dealing with any behaviour issues, which are managed well. The school provides a wide range of information about pupils' progress. Pupils are making good progress and considerable advice is offered to help parents and carers support their children's learning. The quality of teaching and leadership and management are good.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 336 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	61	28	31	5	6	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	57	63	25	28	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	42	47	31	34	8	9	5	6
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	41	39	43	10	11	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	43	48	39	43	7	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	49	35	39	7	8	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	53	35	39	3	3	2	2
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)	33	37	46	51	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	44	37	41	7	8	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	40	33	37	12	13	8	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	45	50	5	6	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	40	44	35	39	9	10	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	43	48	36	40	4	4	5	6

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.**



5 March 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Mary's RC Primary School Manchester, Manchester, M19 2QW

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school for its recent inspection. We appreciated your politeness and enjoyed talking with you. We were impressed by your pride in your school and the way you talked enthusiastically about the things you do. It was lovely to see you dressed as characters for your 'Book Day'. You make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Well done! You also make good progress in your learning, reaching expected standards by Year 6.

Your school is led and managed well. All adults play their part in the smooth running of the school and wanting the best for you. Your headteacher, the teachers and teaching assistants give good help and support and the governors keep a close eye on the school. Through the hard work of the adults the school provides you with outstanding levels of support, guidance and care, and good teaching. The subjects you learn are interesting too and it is good to hear about your involvement in the school council and your work as prefects and 'play pals', helping younger pupils. We know you enjoy these activities, along with the wide range of after-school clubs.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? We have asked your leaders to build on the school's existing strengths to offer more challenging activities for the more-able children to help them do as well as they can and to reach the higher National Curriculum levels. In addition, we have asked the school to put together a plan to give you more experiences of other religions, cultures and communities and to see how that helps your learning.

You attend a good school providing outstanding care, guidance and support for you. Congratulations! Every good wish for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael Onyon

Lead inspector

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