

St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105348
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	355762
Inspection dates	9–10 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ged Higgins
Headteacher	Mr Norman Duffin
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, taught by ten teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, a group of parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the monitoring of pupils' progress, the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement and its documentation relating to safeguarding. The inspectors also analysed 81 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of 106 from pupils and 20 from staff.

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

- The level of pupils' attainment and progress, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching and its impact on learning, especially in Key Stage 2.
- The impact of leadership and management on pupils' achievement, especially in Key Stage 2.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals reflects the national picture. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average; they come from a wide variety of backgrounds. The increasing number of pupils from Eastern Europe means that the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language has grown since the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. However, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs reflects the national average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

The school hosts before- and after-school provision for pupils in the form of St Michael's Out-of-School Club. This provision will be inspected and reported on separately.

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 school. Pupils make good progress as a result of the good provision. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is broadly in line with national averages and rising. A dip in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2009 has been tackled rigorously; data for 2010 shows that at the end of Key Stage 2 attainment rose significantly as a result. Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy coming to school, as seen in their above-average attendance. They feel safe in the school's nurturing and harmonious environment where each individual is known and valued. They are very active in their local community through strong links with the local church.

Relationships with parents and carers are outstanding. So too are pupils' behaviour, their adoption of healthy lifestyles and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Also outstanding is the school's promotion of equality of opportunity and the way in which it tackles discrimination. This results in pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities making progress and achieving as well as, and in some cases, even better than other pupils. It is also evident in the seamless integration and full acceptance of the growing number of pupils who join the school with little or no English. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and with a good variety of activities to keep pupils alert and inquisitive. A minority of the teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory rather than good. It is characterised by too many teacher-led activities and requiring pupils to complete tasks which are sometimes either too easy or too difficult. Good teaching is supported by a good, broad and balanced curriculum. It forges effective links across subjects to add interest and relevance to pupils' learning. Pupils say how much they appreciate the wide range of enrichment activities provided for them.

Leaders and managers ensure securely that evaluation of the school's effectiveness is rigorous and that the outcomes are used to bring about improvement. Since the last inspection, good and outstanding aspects of the school's work have been maintained. This, and the recent rise in attainment following rigorous action, demonstrates the school's good capacity for sustaining improvement. However, while leaders and managers make sure that all procedures and policies for safeguarding are in place, the administration and recording of information relating to safeguarding are not carried out with sufficient rigour and the necessary attention to detail.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the minority of satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2 to at least good and thus raise attainment, by:

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- making sure that tasks set in lessons are appropriately challenging
- making sure that pupils have opportunities to develop their skills as independent learners.
- Make sure that the recording of information relating to safeguarding is carried out with the necessary rigour and attention to detail.

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

Pupils enjoy learning. In lessons they are keen to answer questions. In most lessons they contribute effectively in groups and pairs to share ideas, although occasionally they are expected to listen for too long to the class teacher. Pupils' outstanding behaviour ensures they remain focused even when their concentration span is stretched to the limit. Pupils take pride in presenting their work neatly. They settle to work quickly and enthusiastically. Most are keen to give of their best. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is generally below age-related expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is broadly average and improving. This reflects good achievement over time. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak little or no English when they join the school, also achieve well because of the high quality support they receive.

Pupils demonstrate outstanding knowledge of how important it is to stay healthy. Participation in the very wide range of sporting enrichment activities is exceptionally high. This has been recognised through national awards. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to take on responsibilities in school. For example, older pupils play an active role in supporting and helping younger pupils. Pupils are also active in the local community and are successful fund-raisers for a range of charities. Pupils' solid basic skills and their well-developed personal skills ensure that they are prepared well for the future. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It is underpinned by the strong Christian ethos which permeates the school. Pupils are respectful and welcoming to those who are different. They show deep understanding of right and wrong and great inquisitiveness about the world beyond their immediate surroundings.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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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	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Most teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and most of them use it well to challenge pupils' thinking. Most teaching makes effective use of pair and group work to promote pupils' skills as independent learners. However, sometimes, pupils listen for too long to the teacher. This means that in a few classes, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to learn independently and this limits their progress. In the majority of lessons, assessment information is used effectively to tailor tasks to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils. However, tasks are sometimes set that are too easy or too difficult. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Comments are usually helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

The good curriculum makes sure that links between subjects are planned carefully to add relevance and interest to pupils' learning. There is a wide range of after-school activities in sports and the arts, which add to pupils' enjoyment and adoption of healthy lifestyles. Good care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe in school and valued as individuals. Effective transition arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage ensure children settle quickly. Similarly, well-established transition arrangements ensure that pupils are well prepared for moving to secondary school. Good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language helps them to overcome barriers to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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 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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management, including an effective governing body, are driving the school forward effectively. They provide a sharp focus on improvement. There is good teamwork and a sense of pride among everybody working in the school.

Development planning is good and concentrates on priorities that will make the school even more effective. The monitoring of teaching and learning is good. It results in most teachers being aware of what they need to do to make their teaching better and more effective. Outstanding relationships with parents and carers have been forged. Their opinions are sought regularly and any concerns responded to promptly.

Outstanding promotion of equal opportunities and tackling discrimination are at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and newcomers are integrated seamlessly into the everyday life of the school. All pupils, regardless of background or ability, make good academic progress and outstanding personal development in some respects. This demonstrates the school's outstanding commitment to and success in promoting equality of opportunity.

The school adopts recommended good practice for its procedures and policies relating to safeguarding. Meticulous attention is paid to risk assessment. Staff training in safeguarding and child protection is regular and of good quality. Good links have been established with outside agencies to provide specialist support when need is identified. However, the administration and recording of safeguarding information and data are not sufficiently accurate or robust.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. Pupils work hard in school to create a harmonious community. Visits and visitors raise pupils' awareness and understanding of other religions and cultures. Consequently, pupils show good knowledge and understanding of world cultures and religions. The school goes some way to evaluating its impact on community cohesion, but accepts that it could carry this out more systematically.

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

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 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress and achieve well because teaching meets their learning needs well. Children play well together in a harmonious atmosphere where every child, regardless of ability or background, is valued equally. Overall, children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those normally expected. By the end of Reception, the majority of children attain the expected age-related levels. Solid foundations are being laid, therefore, for children's future learning and progress. Children work and play in a welcoming and stimulating environment. Teaching is enthusiastic and supportive. Children's progress is checked effectively and the outcomes are used to plan activities according to individual children's needs. Children are very happy and obviously enjoy their learning in the safe and nurturing environment. Parents and carers are informed on a regular basis of their child's progress. There are effective arrangements for ensuring that children settle quickly and smoothly into their new surroundings. Where necessary, effective use of outside agencies provides support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders and managers of the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a good vision for future success, a strong sense of purpose for its work and a good balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities to stimulate and engage children in work and play.

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

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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Views of parents and carers

There was a high return of questionnaires from parents and carers, almost all of whom expressed high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the school's work. This supports the inspection judgements that this is a good school and that the school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. 'I would recommend this school to any parent looking for a school. My children have been taught well in all their classes. Most of all though, they love going to school. The school cares for them very well and I know that if I have a concern the staff are always happy to listen and help', is a typical comment.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 230 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	134	74	45	25	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	132	73	46	26	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	80	44	94	52	4	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	107	59	65	36	3	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	110	61	68	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	45	95	53	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	88	49	86	48	2	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)	101	56	73	41	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	98	54	76	42	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	79	44	93	52	2	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	61	34	100	56	6	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	109	61	66	37	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	122	68	55	31	1	1	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



13 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's Roman Catholic Primary School, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 8NJ

Thank you for your warm welcome during the recent inspection of your school. It was a pleasure to meet you and to see you at work and play.

You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school. All of you make good progress as you move up through the school. You have good teachers and they give you interesting things to do. Inspectors were very impressed with your outstanding behaviour and with the outstanding levels of your social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Your adoption of healthy lifestyles is also outstanding. Your school has forged excellent links with your parents and carers. Inspectors were also very impressed with your school's outstanding success in making sure that every one of you is equally valued and supported, including those of you who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the school with little or no English.

To help your school become even better inspectors are asking it to do the following things.

Improve the small amount of satisfactory teaching in Key Stage 2 to at least good and thus raise your attainment by:

- making sure that what you are asked to do in lessons is always appropriately challenging
- making sure that you have opportunities to develop your skills as independent learners.

Make sure that the information relating to safeguarding all of you is recorded with the necessary rigour and attention to detail.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard and help your school go from strength to strength in the coming years. I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall

Lead Inspector

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