



# St Willibrord's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105540  
**Local Authority** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 287254  
**Inspection dates** 27–28 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Arthur Markham

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Vale Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Clayton, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire M11 4WR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2239345
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	211	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2209110
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Fr S Ansbro
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Cunningham
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2002		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 27–28 November 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 287254
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves a deprived inner city area in Manchester. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is well above average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to that in most schools and there are 20 pupils at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is around average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school throughout the year is close to average, but increasing. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark and has Healthy School status.

## 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 with some significant strengths. Its excellent links with the community and other partners ensure that pupils are cared for well and learning is very successfully promoted. Parents rate the school highly and say they appreciate greatly the way the school develops pupils' life skills and values from an early age. Pupils' personal development is outstanding and a very positive factor in the good progress they make in their learning. Staff work hard to develop pupils' self-esteem well so that they become confident learners. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and have very good attitudes to learning. They show increasing maturity as they go through the school and their behaviour is excellent. An environment exists in which pupils are happy and know how to stay safe and healthy. They carry out a range of responsibilities very enthusiastically and are pleased that their views are taken into account through the work of the school council. The good progress they make in acquiring basic skills sets them up well for the future. Parents appreciate the excellent level of pastoral care taken of their children with comments such as, 'the school really cares about each individual and values them equally', being made. Assessment procedures are good. Recently introduced systems have resulted in pupils' performance being more carefully tracked and groups of pupils are set targets, which has raised the quality of academic guidance they are given. However, targets are not always based upon what individual pupils need to do to improve and, as a result, teachers' marking does not always clearly indicate what they must do to make their work better.

Pupils say they enjoy school and this is reflected by the progress they make. Many pupils join the school with limited social and communication skills. They make a good start in the Foundation Stage. Good provision ensures that they progress well from very low starting points, but many do not reach the standards expected by the time they start Year 1. Throughout Years 1 to 6, good teaching and a stimulating curriculum excite pupils who say they like teachers because they 'make learning fun'. They consequently work hard and make good progress as they move up the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are in line with national averages. Given their attainment on entry to the school, this represents good achievement for most pupils. However, few of the more able pupils attain the higher levels because they are not always challenged enough by the work they are set.

Good leadership and management are a major factor in the progress made by pupils. The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She is an excellent role model for staff and gives a very clear educational direction for the school with a strong focus on ensuring that every child matters. Staff are well motivated and share her commitment to providing a high quality education for the pupils. They have readily taken on recently re-assigned responsibilities necessitated by changes in staff. The role of middle managers is, consequently, under-developed and they accept that this is an area for development. Governors are involved and provide effective support and challenge. School self-evaluation procedures are accurate and areas requiring development correctly identified, although the school has been modest in its judgement of pupils'

personal development. The school provides good value for money and has improved well since the last inspection. Capacity for further improvement is good.

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

- Ensure that the work presented to the more able pupils is suitably challenging.
- Set pupils individual targets and ensure that teachers' marking helps them understand better what they need to do to reach them.
- Develop the role of middle managers to enable them to actively contribute to raising standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Pupils enter the school with very low level skills for their age and make good progress to attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. They make a good start in the Foundation Stage because teaching effectively develops positive work habits. However, standards are still below those expected by the time pupils enter Year 1. This good rate of progress continues through Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 2, standards are slightly below average and, by the end of Year 6, they are in line with national averages. Pupils' performance in national tests at Year 6 dipped in 2005, but determined action resulted in a marked improvement in results in 2006. The careful tracking of pupils' performance enabled the accurate targeting of support for any underachieving and, as a result, the progress in learning made by pupils was very high. The standards being attained by the current pupils are similar to those expected nationally. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language make good progress because the support they are given effectively meets their needs, although the more able pupils do not make the progress they should. In the main, this is because they are not always challenged enough by the work they are set.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Parents are very pleased that their children really enjoy coming to school. This was summed up by one pupil who described the school as, 'Just perfect'. As a result, attendance is improving and is now close to the national average. Relationships are very good and pupils respond by behaving extremely well. Pupils play safely and understand the importance of eating healthily. Through the work of the school council, they have been instrumental in the development of the playground 'buddying' system. They participate well in fundraising activities and local developments, such as the design of the entrance to Clayton Vale Park. Their very positive attitudes to learning and good achievement in basic skills prepare them well for the next stage in their schooling.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons move along at a brisk pace and teachers make work interesting so that pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain activities clearly so that pupils understand what they have to do. The use of searching questions challenges pupils' thinking and good use of praise raises their self-esteem. They consequently become more confident and display very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers set pupils group targets, but these do not clearly indicate what each individual pupil must do to improve. In addition, teachers' marking often does not relate to the pupils' targets and indicate what they must do to reach them. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English, but not enough attention is given to ensuring that the more able pupils are suitably challenged.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of the vast majority of learners well, but planning does not always ensure that the more able pupils are suitably challenged. In the Foundation Stage, close attention is given to developing children's social skills but they are also given early access to elements of literacy and numeracy in a structured yet playful way. Throughout the school, close attention is given to the basic skills in literacy and numeracy and links between subjects are made to make learning more interesting. Specialist lessons in Italian and French enrich pupils' learning experiences. The strong focus on personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. A wide range of visits and visitors contributes to pupils' enjoyment and supports their learning well. Pupils are given many opportunities to contribute to the life of the community; for example, Year 6 pupils say that they are really looking forward to singing at a premiership football match in the early New Year.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. The pastoral support offered to pupils is particularly strong. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place and are regularly checked. Pupils say they feel safe at school, and are comfortable about confiding in staff if the need arises. The school's outstanding links with outside agencies result in excellent support being provided for vulnerable pupils in addition to those with learning difficulties and a growing number who are learning English as an additional language. Thorough and effective arrangements help children to settle into the Foundation Stage and Year 6 pupils are well prepared for the next stage of

education. Academic guidance is less well developed. Pupils are aware of their group targets but personal targets for improvement and consistency of support for higher attaining pupils are not yet fully embedded across the school. Furthermore, teachers' guidance through marking is not consistently good in all classes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The good leadership and management evident in the school are a major factor in the rapid rate of progress pupils make personally, socially and academically throughout the school. The relatively new headteacher is providing outstanding leadership. She has a very clear vision of what must be done to further improve the work of the school and has successfully conveyed this to staff and governors. This has generated an effective team approach. A number of recent changes in staff has resulted in the need to re-assign middle management responsibilities. These are being carried out enthusiastically by staff, although their monitoring role is not fully developed. Assessment procedures ensure that pupils' performance is carefully monitored and determined action is being taken to raise standards. Parents have a high regard for the school, with a typical comment being, 'My child has benefited greatly from his primary education at St Willibrord's.' Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive yet challenging.

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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?	1
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	3
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>	1
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	1
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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**

As you know, two inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well you are learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to us. We very much enjoyed being in your school and listening to what you had to say. We decided that St Willibrord's RC Primary is a good school. We are pleased at the way the school is always trying to improve and make learning interesting for you. It is a very welcoming place and the staff take good care of you. They all work hard to make sure that you feel safe and happy. This was very clear to us because many of you told us how much you enjoy school. We were impressed at your very good awareness of the need to have a healthy diet and the importance of taking part in lots of physical activities. But most of all we liked the way you work hard for your teachers and behave so brilliantly in lessons and around the school. This is so important and is one of the reasons you achieve so well.

We think there are some things the school needs to do to make it even better. The staff need to make sure that the work you are set is challenging enough so that you do as well as you are able, especially those of you who could do harder work. They should also ensure that the targets you are set make clear to each of you what you need to do to improve and make comments when marking your work that help you to understand if you are reaching them. We also think that teachers in charge of subjects need to check carefully how well you are doing in lessons so that they can help you to reach even higher standards.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that St Willibrord's RC Primary becomes an even better school.