

St Richard's RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105544
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	395442
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Marie Cordey

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	399
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr. Michael Dever
Headteacher	Mrs Sharon Sesnan
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Marie Cordey
Terry Bond
Elaine Maloney

Additional inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 12 teachers and visited 20 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspectors made other more brief visits to lessons and also heard pupils read. Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, members of staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plans, safeguarding documentation and records of internal and external monitoring of the school. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires completed by 259 parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St. Richard's is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is high. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, but the majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school meets the current floor standards which set the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

The school is one of 12 included in the national survey 'Reading at 6 – How the best schools do it.' It has gained the International School award and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Mark for its work in improving pupils' ICT skills.

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	1
Achievement of pupils	1
Quality of teaching	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. It makes a significant difference to the lives of its pupils and prepares them exceptionally well for their future education. It is a hub of the community and parents and carers comment overwhelmingly positively about its effectiveness.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in their learning and attainment is well-above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils are excited and curious about learning; their reading skills are fluent, accurate and expressive. This is a school where reading is celebrated, nurtured and enjoyed. Children settle down quickly and happily in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress in their learning. Outdoor learning is not as rapid as that indoors and further development of outdoor provision is a school priority for improvement.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Pupils thrive in an atmosphere of challenge. The highest expectations of pupils' achievement, teachers' excellent subject knowledge and thoughtful planning to match the interests and abilities of individual pupils characterise lessons.
- Pupils are extremely welcoming and very keen to engage with each other, with staff and with visitors. Their empathy, sense of justice and excellent behaviour reflect the spiritual, moral and uplifting character of the school. The vast majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour is a strength of the school and that their children feel safe. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and safety are outstanding.
- Leadership is outstanding. A non-negotiable belief that pupils at St. Richard's can achieve at the highest level is shared by all staff. Consequently, pupils are encouraged to aspire to be university students and to aim for challenging, successful careers from the youngest age. This reflects the school's excellent promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Leaders manage the school's performance and lead teaching very effectively to ensure that pupils achieve exceptionally well and that they are happy.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to further develop children's independence, their physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Nursery class with skills that are, overall, below the expectations for their age. They develop their curiosity for learning and play because they are provided with a wide range of rich experiences. They learn to link sounds and letters particularly well because emerging reading is made enjoyable and pleasurable. For instance, children listen avidly to teachers and support assistants who read stories that are brought to life skilfully and expressively. They relish role play, sand and water activities as well as developing their number and writing skills both indoors and out. However, resources are more limited outdoors and there is less scope for children to develop their independence, their physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's skills improve by the end of their time in the Reception classes and they are broadly average when they enter Year 1.

All groups of pupils, including those with English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make consistently outstanding progress across the school. Currently, a significant proportion of pupils are working at Level 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. In Year 5, almost half of the pupils have already achieved Level 5 in their subjects after taking standard assessment tests (SATs) a year early. This represents high attainment for these pupils. In particular, pupils' reading skills are celebrated in classrooms, corridors and spaces throughout the school. It is a delightful and humbling experience to be surrounded by such accomplished work. Attainment in reading is above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average by the end of Year 6. The school is very effective in developing pupils' writing skills as well as their attainment in all other subjects. Pupils' enthusiasm for the paintings of L.S. Lowry, for example, lead to moving, detailed and credible accounts detailing the stories inspired by the pictures. This school has a 'can do' attitude and high aspirations for its pupils. As a matter of course, therefore, pupils are continuously challenged to extend their knowledge and understanding. Consequently, pupils check their own spelling, punctuation and grammar, discuss problem-solving and investigational work in mathematics and compete to read aloud with flair and assurance. This enthusiasm, commitment and enjoyment of learning applies to all their subjects and new technology is used very effectively to enhance research, the presentation of work and ICT skills. Parents and carers believe that their children achieve very well and inspection evidence confirms this.

Quality of teaching

Much teaching is outstanding and is never less than consistently good. It is characterised by extremely positive relationships, high expectations and a concerted determination to

promote high quality learning. Parents and carers believe that their children are very well taught across the school and inspection evidence confirms this.

In an outstanding English lesson in Year 6, for example, pupils wrote stirring and evocative paragraphs to describe a young boy's first day in a concentration camp. Similarly, pupils studying lifecycles in a Year 5 science lesson were engrossed because explanations were very clear and related to their life experiences. Pupils have high expectations of themselves in an atmosphere of aspiration and enjoyment. This makes a very effective contribution to their exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The planned curriculum ensures that individual interests and abilities are matched to their learning. Consequently, any pupils who are reluctant to read are provided with books, media materials or internet resources directly matched to their interests. Teaching incorporates pupils' experiences and pupils' work includes, for example, planning budgets to save up for a special treat, writing letters to local and national government and linking with the University of Oxford to re-enforce their commitment to university education. Pupils are aware of their performance, as well as how to improve. Homework is matched to the ability of the individual pupil and involves parents and carers in developing their child's learning. Marking is up-to-date and thorough and pupils act on teachers' comments. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who are disabled and those with special educational needs are supported and challenged exceptionally well. Support assistants are involved in planning lessons and provide carefully-tailored support and challenge to individuals and small groups very effectively. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well taught and enjoy learning because they are encouraged to be curious. They are proud of their letter recognition and ability to read stories as well as their cookery skills and music making.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are relentless in their determination to share all the 'amazing' aspects of their school. They are unfailingly polite, enthusiastic and charming. The vast majority of pupils and their parents and carers believe that behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Inspectors agree with their positive comments, but judge that behaviour and engagement are outstanding. Pupils feel safe and any incidents of bullying are extremely rare. Pupils are aware of bullying in all its forms, for example cyber bullying and prejudice-based bullying. This is because the school is fervent in its actions to promote tolerance and respect for others and to celebrate diversity. Pupils have empathy for others and frequently mentioned that 'you have to walk in another person's shoes'. Pupils are proud of themselves and their school. They are particularly proud when they are elected to positions of responsibility. The head boy and head girl, prefects and playground buddies, for instance, take their duties very seriously and help in the smooth running of the school. Older pupils are conscientious when looking after younger pupils. There is a palpable atmosphere of respect and dignity. Diversity in this multi-cultural school is celebrated and differences in religion and background are respected and valued. Excellent links with the parish and the local community reflect pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are high expectations of pupils' behaviour ranging from table manners in the dining room to respect and care for others. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life and their above average attendance and impressive punctuality represent a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

Leadership and management

Leaders, managers and the governing body demonstrate an unequivocal determination to raise pupils' attainment and to ensure that pupils are happy and safe. High expectations of pupils' performance are at the heart of the school's character. Staff and pupils, as well as parents and carers share this belief. The success of leaders' actions demonstrates excellent capacity to sustain improvements.

Leaders understand the school's strengths and areas for improvement very well because of high-quality monitoring and evaluation procedures. This school is constantly seeking to improve its effectiveness. Professional development of teachers is regular and of a high standard. Leaders both challenge and support staff by rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching, very effective management of teachers' performance and regular and accurate tracking of pupils' progress. Plans are already in place to improve the quality of outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. St. Richard's is a very popular school and is at the centre of the local community.

The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. Community parent and carer workshops to help their children learn are frequent and well supported. Leaders and the governing body are vigilant in tackling discrimination. This commitment to equality of opportunity results in all groups of pupils making outstanding progress in their learning. The outstanding governing body is strongly involved in school life and diligent in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet requirements. The relentless determination of leaders and staff to ensure that pupils succeed is demonstrated in a high-quality curriculum, which is broad and balanced and which has the promotion of basic skills at its heart. The teaching of reading, for example, is recognised nationally as being a model of best practice. ICT is an integral part of the curriculum and advances pupils' knowledge and understanding of all subjects. The curriculum is deliberately planned to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Consequently, it is just as likely that pupils will be reflecting quietly about social issues as well as writing high-quality stories with a partner school. Learning French begins at an early age and pupils are keen to demonstrate their language skills to visitors. The vast majority of parents and carers would recommend this school to others.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Richard's RC Primary School, Manchester, M12 5TL

It was a delight to visit your school. Thank you for welcoming us so pleasantly and so positively. You are excellent ambassadors of your school. Well done to each one of you! We will take away very happy memories of our time with you. Thank you also to the pupils who gave us such an exceptionally good tour of the school and to those of you who met and talked to us.

Yours is an outstanding school. Your behaviour is exemplary. You make outstanding progress in your learning and reach standards that are well above the national average. Your reading skills in particular are exceptionally good. You enjoy learning and it was a pleasure for us to see how much you want to discover about the world and increase your knowledge. You treat yourselves and others with respect. Children in the Early Years Foundations Stage make good progress and are welcomed into school by you all. We would like your school to provide more opportunities for children in the Nursery and Reception classes to learn outdoors and the school has plans to do this.

We are confident that you will achieve well in your future lives and make a big difference to our world. Your leaders, governors, teachers and all the staff want the best for you. You deserve the best because you are such thoughtful, mature young people. Congratulations!

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Marie Cordey
Lead Inspector

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