

Mount Carmel RC Primary School

Wilson Road, Blackley, Manchester, M9 8BG

Inspection dates 20–21 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Pupils are very happy, are proud of their school, and say they 'wouldn't change anything'. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils are always polite, respectful and considerate and say that they feel very safe at school, one reason why their attendance is above average.
- A particular strength is pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, fostered through very strong parish links. Pupils are very well prepared to become useful members of society.
- All parents who responded to the online questionnaire said that their children are kept safe and the school makes sure they are well behaved.
- Achievement is outstanding and attainment is above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those supported by the pupil premium, make good or better progress throughout the school.
- Outstanding teaching provides imaginatively planned activities which capture pupils' interests so that they work hard and enjoy learning.
- The rich curriculum, which includes many educational trips and visits, provides pupils with high quality learning activities and memorable experiences.
- Reading is taught well, giving pupils valuable skills to use in all subjects.
- Rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and targeted professional development support leaders' aim of making the school even more successful. However, as yet, subject leaders are not fully involved in this work.
- The inspirational headteacher is ably supported by leaders and managers at all levels. More teaching is outstanding, attainment is rising and the school has very strong capacity for further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The team observed 21 lessons, visited small-group teaching sessions and observed break-times and lunch-times.
- Inspectors met with pupils and staff, members of the governing body and held telephone discussions with local authority representatives.
- The team looked at: how the school gathers an accurate picture of pupil performance and assesses the quality of teaching and learning; national data; and arrangements for pupils' safeguarding.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' workbooks, looked at the work on display and heard some pupils read.
- They took account of the 28 responses on-line in Parent View and considered the responses in the 40 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Frances Farnorth	Additional Inspector
Benedict Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than most primary schools and the number of pupils has grown considerably since the previous inspection. The infant and junior pupils are sited in two buildings that are some distance apart.
- The proportion of pupils from different ethnic groups has also increased since the previous inspection. About 67% are of White British heritage, others are of African or mixed heritage and a small number speak English as their second language.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those children that are looked after, and the children of service families) is 38%, which is above the national average.
- There have been a number of staffing changes since the previous inspection.
- The school meets the governments' current floor standards, the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school offers a breakfast club each day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further extend the systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning so that subject leaders are fully involved in the on-going development of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Most children start school with skills well below those typical for their age. They are very well cared for so they feel safe, secure and ready to explore the excellent range of activities both indoors and outside. Nursery children loved counting in squeaky, deep or whispering voices and more-able Reception children made good attempts to write complex words. Children make excellent progress. At the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most exceed the expected levels of development and are ready for Year 1.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 is above the expected levels, and this has been maintained since the previous inspection. School tracking information and pupils' work show that pupils currently in Year 2 are on course to sustain these high levels of attainment.
- By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. In 2013, pupils did particularly well in the new grammar, punctuation and spelling test, with two thirds reaching the higher level.
- Extra activities designed to really extend the more-able pupils include publishing the school magazine, and many arrive at 8 o'clock each day, eager to attend the popular Maths Club. In 2013, a similar proportion to that found nationally reached the very highest level in mathematics.
- A slight dip in writing standards has been rigorously tackled with additional resources, training and visits to stimulate pupils' imagination. Pupils now write confidently and at length, for example accounts of life in the 1930s.
- Pupils' workbooks and school tracking information show that a high proportion of pupils currently in Year 6 are securely on course to meet and exceed the progress expected of them and to attain the higher levels in English and mathematics.
- Those supported by pupil premium funding receive extra provision and activities, and often work in a small group so they progress at the same rate as their classmates. Their attainment exceeds that of similar pupils nationally, but is around one term behind that of their classmates. However, school data show that this gap is rapidly closing. This demonstrates the school's strong promotion of equal opportunities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and targeted exactly where needed. Support is directed precisely to their individual needs so pupils are able to progress at the same rate as, and sometimes faster than, their classmates.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Daily letters and sounds lessons for younger pupils ensure that they know how to tackle unfamiliar words, and outcomes in the phonics screening check for younger pupils were well above the national average in 2013. Older pupils read fluently and express definite preferences for particular genres. One said reading is, 'like being in my own private world'. Pupils make full use of their reading skills in all subjects, and are well equipped for future learning.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Pupils say 'We learn lots of new things', and the teachers 'are fair'. Behaviour in lessons is always good or better, ensuring that no learning time is wasted. High quality, supportive relationships were seen in all classes, ensuring that pupils always make good or better progress.
- Monitoring by senior leaders over time, and observations during the inspection, show that lessons are carefully planned to provide challenging tasks which are closely matched to pupils' different abilities. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and questioning skills to keep all pupils 'on their toes' and actively involved.
- Bright displays showcase good examples of work in all subjects, celebrating pupils' success and providing very good examples for others. For example, writing about life on the Home Front in the Second World War.

- The highly skilled and well-informed teaching assistants make a strong contribution to pupils' progress. They provide particularly valuable support for pupils who may find learning difficult and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, so that they are able to progress as well as their classmates.
- Teachers develop pupils' knowledge and understanding step-by-step so that pupils know what they are going to learn and can progress rapidly. This was very evident in a technology lesson where pupils built exceptionally well on their previous learning to tackle a graphics design task. This raised pupils' aspirations and awareness of future possibilities, and one even declared that architecture would be their chosen career.
- Pupil progress is checked regularly. The tracking system gives detailed information that staff use to plan varied activities that are closely matched to pupils' different abilities. During lessons, teachers frequently check pupils' responses and progress, and reshape or adjust activities to make sure that they fully understand their tasks or to add extra challenge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Excellent behaviour and attitudes were observed in lessons, around the school and when pupils were playing outside. In all classes, pupils are careful to present their work neatly and carefully. In the junior building, pupils use the many flights of stairs with great care and consideration for their own and each other's safety. The school is a safe, happy place for everyone, which supports pupils' progress and their excellent personal and social development.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because, 'Teachers are always outside and the fence is secure', and that they can turn to any adult for help, knowing they will be listened to. They know how to care for their own safety, for example when using the internet. They are aware of different forms of bullying, such as cyber-bullying, but do not consider bullying to be a problem at the school, and their parents agree.
- Staff apply behaviour management strategies consistently, which adds to the positive atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils understand the need for rules, regard them as fair, and are very keen not to lose a moment of Golden Time on Fridays. Older pupils show increasingly mature attitudes and know they are responsible for their own behaviour, saying, 'It's up to us to make good choices'.
- Pupils are keen to take the many opportunities to serve the school, the parish and the wider community, representing their classmates on the school council, serving in church and carrying out charity fundraising.
- Attendance is above average and the vast majority arrive promptly. Pupils who attend the breakfast club are very well cared for with healthy food and a variety of activities within a safe environment.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- School leaders are unanimous in their very ambitious vision for the school and how good it can be, and they make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities for high quality learning. All staff fully support this vision, are strongly committed to further improvement and their morale is very high.
- Staff are held fully accountable for pupil progress. Rigorous performance management and appraisal of teachers' performance is very effectively supported by well-organised professional development. School monitoring over time and inspection evidence both show that this has successfully raised the proportion of teaching judged to be outstanding.
- Leadership is successfully distributed to enable staff to extend and develop their professional and managerial skills. Senior staff provide good role models of high quality teaching and leadership skills. Subject leaders are well informed and focus on improving outcomes but are not fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in their subjects.

- Excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a real strength, demonstrated in pupils' considerate behaviour, respect and their enthusiasm for learning. Pupils take every opportunity to participate in sports, perform with the choir or play a musical instrument. These broaden pupils' experiences and raise their aspirations.
- The outstanding curriculum, carefully adapted for pupils' different needs and abilities, ensures that they acquire high-quality basic skills through a very broad range of memorable experiences so that they are well equipped for the future. Links between subjects and themed weeks capture pupils' imagination and make learning more meaningful.
- Writing skills are used and developed across the curriculum, such as describing plant growth in science or instructions for making a Tudor cake in history. Pupils spoke highly of visits out of school, including the Year 6 residential, and they were all excited about the forthcoming visit to the pantomime.
- The school works very well with parents and values their contribution, further aided by the appointment of the family worker who provides skilled support for pupils and their families.
- Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. Records are maintained carefully and child protection and first aid training is up-to-date.
- The local authority provides light touch support, and recognises the skills of school leaders and members of the staff, using them to share and extend good practice beyond the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors bring a valuable range of skills and strong parish links, and provide rigorous challenge and well-informed support to school leaders. They are well equipped to contribute to school self-evaluation, plan for on-going improvement and ensure that all pupils are very well cared for in a safe environment.
 - Governors question leaders about pupil progress and attainment, and use data and information from various sources to compare the school's performance with others locally and nationally. They know that the small attainment gap between pupils supported by pupil premium funding and their classmates, is rapidly decreasing due to strategic use of this funding. They have also made sure that initiatives financed by the new sports funding to benefit pupils' health are sustainable, although there has not yet been time to establish the impact this is having.
 - Finances are managed skilfully to support improvement. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that school leaders use professional development to improve the quality of teaching and develop leadership skills at all levels, and that the outcomes of staff performance reviews are related to any rewards for good or better teaching.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105555
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	426286

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	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Catherine Anderson
Headteacher	Patricia Ganley
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2010
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