

St Simon and Jude CofE Primary School, Bolton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105213
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377201
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Shirley Herring

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ned Solanki
Headteacher	Simon T. Bramwell
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Shirley Herring
Jean Tarry
Sheila Loughlin

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 14 teachers in 28 lessons, listened to pupils read and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. They also talked to parents and carers informally in the playground. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, documentation regarding the safeguarding of pupils, assessments and tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils, the school development plan and reports from the School Improvement Partner. They scrutinised 95 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff. In addition, they looked at the on-line questionnaire (Parent View); however, there were no responses to aid inspection planning.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average primary school. The largest groups represented in the school are White British and children from Pakistani heritage. There are a number of smaller groups from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average as is the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The school has met government floor standards. In January 2011, the school was designated as a National Support School. In April, it took over the leadership and management of a school in a nearby authority. The executive headteacher oversees the leadership and management of both schools and the deputy headteacher has day-to-day responsibility for this school. The school manages a breakfast club on site.

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	2
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Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	1

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Achievement is improving rapidly because of the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders. Leaders and managers have set much higher expectations and have brought about very rapid improvement to the quality of teaching. Pupils make good progress. Attainment is above average and on a steep upward trend. Pupils make very rapid progress in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1, achievement is improving but it does not yet match that in Key Stage 2, although the gap is closing securely. Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching is good and there is a good range of activities to support their learning.
- Teaching is good with examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are well-planned to take account of previous learning and meet the needs of all pupils well. Learning moves at a quick pace because teachers often give pupils time limits to complete a variety of tasks. Teachers make good use of practical activities to enhance learning. However, there are a few shortcomings such as missed opportunities for pupils to explain their ideas at length to extend and reinforce their learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding both in lessons and around the school. Pupils say behaviour has improved immeasurably because of the high expectations of the headteacher and staff. Pupils show excellent attitudes to their work and this has had a strong impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Attendance is improving rapidly and is above average.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Staff respond well to the high expectations placed on them and the very good level of training and support they receive. Consequently, teaching is improving and achievement is rising rapidly and securely.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance and accelerate progress further, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that the new arrangements for teaching pupils in groups according to ability in mathematics are fully effective
 - giving pupils more opportunities to explain their ideas at length to extend their learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Learning and progress observed in lessons is good and sometimes outstanding. This was confirmed by the quality of work in pupils' books. Pupils are well-motivated and keen to do their best. They respond well to regular challenges. This was seen in Year 6 where pupils in pairs concentrated hard on memorising their tables effectively so that they could gain the prized gold award for recalling and using multiplication. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They work effectively together to explore ideas and persevere when they find something difficult, for example, when using their phonics skills to sound out difficult, new words.

Achievement is good and improving because of the rapidly improving quality of teaching and the much higher expectations set by leaders and managers. Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below, and sometimes well below, what could be expected for their age. Children make good progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage because provision and teaching are good. Good progress is maintained as pupils move up through the school to attain above average and improving standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is improving, but is not yet as high as in Key Stage 2 where pupils' learning and progress accelerate very rapidly. Attainment in writing by the end of Key Stage 2 is securely above average and in mathematics it is improving at a fast pace and is above average in the current year. School data supported by inspection evidence show that rapid improvement and above average attainment are set to continue.

Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs achieve well because of the good level of support they receive in lessons, in groups or individually. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well because of the effective support, including bilingual support, they receive.

Attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2 and is above average in Year 6. The vast majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and inspectors endorse this view

Quality of teaching

Almost all parent and carers believe that teaching in the school is good. Teachers are accomplished in adjusting the planned curriculum to suit the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities in their class and effectively extend pupils' skills and understanding over time. Teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good with some examples of outstanding practice. For example, much teaching is very effective in revising lesson plans to reflect pupils' prior learning and adapt to pupils' different skills and needs. Lessons are interesting and teachers make good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils' interest and to explain new work. Pupils have good opportunities to work together to explore new ideas. In a small minority of lessons, however, there are missed opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking to help them to extend their understanding and develop their communication skills. Prompt marking of work gives pupils a good overview of their progress, but sometimes lacks detail with regard to correcting punctuation and spellings. Teachers generally take good account of assessment information to match work to the needs of most groups and individuals. However, sometimes the level of challenge is not high enough, especially for more-able pupils

The many skills of teaching assistants are well-deployed and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of practical resources to help pupils understand new concepts. This was seen in several successful mathematics lessons. For example, pupils in Year 1 use cubes and number lines to help them to subtract and pupils in Year 6 bisect rectangles to discover how to find the area of a triangle. This is helping to raise attainment rapidly in mathematics through the school.

Teachers and support staff apply the school's strategies for managing behaviour consistently. Consequently, minor disruptions in lessons are rare and dealt with effectively. There is a high expectation for pupils to follow the example of adults who treat pupils courteously and with respect; this makes a good contribution to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children achieve well. There is a good balance between activities led by an adult and those children choose for themselves, indoors and outside.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils, parents and carers are overwhelmingly of the view that pupils behave exceptionally well. All pupils are extremely courteous and polite. The school is a harmonious place where pupils from different ethnic backgrounds work well together and learn from each other. Instances of bullying of any sort are very rare. Pupils say that on the few occasions when it happens, it is dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. The school helps to raise pupils' awareness through anti-bullying weeks, including workshops for parents and carers and pupils about issues such as cyber-bullying. Consequently, pupils are exceptionally aware of aspects such as e-safety and say they could not think of anything else the school could do to make them feel any safer. Older pupils speak warmly of the huge improvement in behaviour in lessons and in the playground in recent years because

of the high expectations and consistent approach of senior leaders, managers and all the adults working with them. Classrooms are calm and well-ordered. This encourages exceptional behaviour and very good attitudes to work. This improvement has made a significant contribution to pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Effective actions by the school have resulted in steady improvements in attendance, which is above average. Pupils are consistently punctual to school and lessons.

Leadership and management

Outstanding leadership and management are driving the school forward at a very fast pace. Expectations are very high. This has led to rapid and sustained improvements in pupils' achievement and behaviour. Senior leaders provide teachers with clear guidance so that there is a consistent approach towards assessment and planning. This has brought about striking improvement to the quality of teaching and its impact on learning and progress. Extensive monitoring of lessons and well-focused training have been pivotal in driving up the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Rigorous assessments and tracking of pupils' progress have been very effective in raising achievement in Key Stage 2 and are starting to have a positive impact in Key Stage 1. The decision to teach pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 in sets according to ability has helped to provide appropriate support and challenge and to raise attainment rapidly in Key Stage 2. A similar arrangement has recently been introduced in Key Stage 1 and there are early signs that this is having a similar, positive impact.

Members of the governing body provide well-informed challenge for the leadership team so that implications of change are considered in advance. Governors carry out meticulously their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and staff. All the recommended policies and procedures are securely in place. The school is highly effective in making sure that equality of opportunity is at the heart of its work. As a result, all groups of pupils make good and improving progress with a rapidly growing proportion of pupils attaining at least the nationally expected levels in English and mathematics and increasing numbers exceeding them by the end of Key Stage 2. Since the headteacher took up post less than four years ago, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected levels in English and mathematics has risen from just over half to 85%. Inspection evidence shows this rapid improvement is set to continue.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is outstanding. This is seen in the excellence of their behaviour and the respect and understanding with which all groups of pupils interact. There is excellent cohesion and respect between pupils of different faiths and cultures.

The curriculum is outstanding. It provides pupils with a wide range of memorable learning experiences and meets their needs closely. An excellent range of planned opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across subjects has brought about rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' writing skills. Similar opportunities develop numeracy skills and this has resulted in significant improvement in mathematics across the school. The proportion of Year 6 pupils currently on target to

meet or exceed the expected level in mathematics matches the proportion in English and is above average.

Leaders and managers have used the opportunities of leading and managing the link school very astutely to hone and develop their skills even further. This has led to very significant and sustained improvements in achievement, teaching and behaviour since the last inspection. This demonstrates the school's very strong capacity to improve further.

The Breakfast Club, run by the school, provides a good start to the day for many pupils, including some in the Early Years Foundation Stage. It takes place in a welcoming and safe environment. It has had a significant impact on improving attendance.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	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 2010 to 31 August 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 (seau).

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.
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.
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.



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of St Simon and Jude C of E Primary School, Bolton, Bolton, BL3 2DT

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in small groups and found your views very useful. You are exceptionally polite, friendly and extremely well-behaved. You are a credit to your parents and carers and your school. Well done!

Just like you, your parents and carers we judge St Simon and St Jude's to be a good school in which behaviour, safety and leadership and management are outstanding. You told us how much things have improved in school in the last few years. This is because the school is organised and managed so very well. The teaching you receive is good and you are making good progress and achieving well. Your regular attendance shows how much you are enjoying school and makes a strong contribution to you learning – well done!

Lessons are interesting and varied and so you learn well. I was really pleased to see you so eager to learn your tables and I hope you manage to achieve the gold award. All adults are keen for you to do your best and there is always someone on hand for those who need extra help.

It is part of our job to suggest ways in which even a good school can improve further. So, I am asking your school to make sure that the improving progress you make in Key Stage 1 is every bit as good as in Key Stage 2 by:

- ensuring that the new arrangements for teaching you in groups according to your ability is fully effective
- giving you more opportunities to explain your ideas at length to help you learn better.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure your school continues to go from strength to strength in the coming years. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring, Lead Inspector

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