

St Oswald's CofE Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130929
Local Authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	360160
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	132
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Rowlands
Headteacher	Mrs Phillippa Rowe
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
School address	Grove Road Mollington, Chester Cheshire CH1 6LG
Telephone number	01244 981040
Fax number	01244 851643
Email address	admin@stoswald-moll.cheshire.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons or part lessons and these included the observation of six teachers. Meetings were held with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation, including pupils' past and present work, assessment and tracking information, monitoring and evaluation records, and additional evidence of the support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Inspectors also looked at whether the school meets statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding. A representative sample of questionnaires returned by pupils and staff and 73 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. Inspectors looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether pupils' attainment in Years 3 to 6 is high enough in mathematics.
- The extent to which more-able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are challenged in English and mathematics.
- How aware pupils are of diversity in British society and their understanding of wider global issues.

Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and of those who are assessed as having special educational needs and/or disabilities are both well below average. More pupils than average join and leave the school at times other than at the start of the school year. As a result, the number of pupils in each year group varies from year to year. The school holds Healthy School status and has achieved Eco-school silver, Activemark and the Basic Skills Quality Mark awards.

Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable changes in teaching and support staff.

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. Leaders and managers are effective. There is a clear, shared vision for the future. Self-evaluation is thorough, honest and accurate and, as a consequence, the correct priorities for improvement are identified, sharply focused and carefully pursued. The impact of actions taken to tackle key priorities is robustly evaluated. This has a positive impact on outcomes for all groups of pupils. Areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. As a result, the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils feel safe and have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. A typical view reported by the overwhelming majority of pupils is, 'This is a very friendly school. Adults always listen and help you; they cheer you up if you are sad.' Pupils who join the school partway through the year say they settle quickly and make many new friends. The positive views of their parents and carers confirm this. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent overall. Pupils are very proud of their school and respond extremely well to its Christian values. All pupils take on responsibility willingly. They make an exceptional contribution to the school, church and immediate community.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have a good start to their education. Children enter Reception typically with skills that are in line with those expected for their age, but this can vary from year to year. They enjoy learning and achieve well. In the main, learning areas are cheerful and well resourced but occasionally, the range of activities that children can choose for themselves both indoors and outside is too narrow, and their purpose is not always sufficiently clear. This restricts the chances children have to choose to learn independently and, consequently, sometimes their progress slows.

Teaching is good. A number of outstanding lessons were observed during the inspection. In all classes, marking is consistently good and, overwhelmingly, pupils say that it helps them to improve their work. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics. However, fewer pupils than average attain higher levels in these subjects because planned work is not always closely matched to their needs. Taking account of pupils' varying start points at school, their progress and enjoyment of learning is good. This represents good achievement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the achievement of the more-able pupils in English and mathematics by ensuring that teachers plan tasks that provide them with a greater depth of challenge.

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- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by ensuring that a wider range of purposeful activities that children can choose for themselves is consistently available indoors and outside.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Overwhelmingly, pupils say they enjoy learning and that their lessons are fun. Nearly all are well motivated and show good levels of concentration. The majority of pupils work enthusiastically with a partner or in groups and this is helping them to become confident and mature learners. Most try their best at all times and say they learn a lot in lessons, but a minority comment that their work is not hard enough. Relationships are caring and friendly and, unanimously, pupils state they are not afraid to ask for help if they need it. Pupils' behaviour is good. Nearly all pupils, even the very youngest, are keen to help and support each other. This has a positive impact on their achievement and enjoyment of learning.

Pupils' learning and progress are good because of the good teaching they receive.

For the most part, in English and mathematics the more-able pupils are given tasks that are more difficult than their peers. However, these do not always have sufficient depth and challenge to enable pupils to attain the higher level. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and enjoy learning because of the sensitive guidance they receive from the teaching assistants. Taking account of the varying numbers who join the school and the range of pupils' differing needs and abilities, overall their achievement is good.

Pupils state confidently that their views are listened to and acted upon and that they are able to contribute to the school's improvement. For example, the junior road safety officers are actively involved in helping to promote road safety outside the school gate. Pupils have an excellent understanding of ethical and environmental issues. Their awareness of their school, immediate locality and global issues is developed well; however, their understanding of different communities within the United Kingdom is not quite as strong. Pupils demonstrate an exceptional awareness of how to lead healthy lifestyles and this extends through all year groups. Their understanding is typified by a comment made by one of the very youngest pupils: 'You should eat carrots because they are full of vitamins and drink milk because it contains calcium; this helps your bones grow.' Pupils' above average standards in English and mathematics, their very strong personal and social skills and above average attendance give them a good basis for their future learning.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Almost all lessons are lively and adults use praise well to build pupils' confidence and esteem. In the very best lessons, teachers capture pupils' attention through the use of very well chosen resources and practical tasks. Unanimously, pupils comment that these help them to learn more rapidly. A good range of strategies is used to fully engage pupils. For instance, pupils talk in pairs, work in small groups or have quick-fire question and answer activities to question each other; this successfully promotes speaking and listening. In most lessons skilful questioning engages pupils' interest and extends their knowledge and skills. In the main, teachers' planning makes effective use of good quality assessment information to ensure that the needs and abilities of all groups of pupils are met, but sometimes, work for the more-able pupils in English and mathematics is not sufficiently demanding. In all classes marking is helpful and provides constructive comments to help pupils improve. For the most part, pupils comment that their learning targets, especially in mathematics, help them to improve their work.

The well-planned curriculum is carefully adjusted to meet the requirements of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Themed events, such as the 'around the world week', add depth to pupils' learning and make a good contribution to their cultural awareness. Pupils have good opportunities to practise their literacy skills, and those to increase their mathematical skills are increasing. Excellent provision is made for the

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personal, social, emotional and health education of pupils. They greatly enjoy the exceptionally wide range of activities beyond lessons.

Pupils benefit from high quality care, guidance and support. Adults in the school value pupils' opinions and show them respect. In turn, pupils accept one another, regardless of their ethnic or social background. 'It doesn't matter what colour your skin is, we're all the same inside', is a comment that typifies pupils' views. There is excellent support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This results in their increased motivation and greater access to the curriculum. Without exception, pupils say there is an adult to turn to for help if they are sad or troubled. Arrangements to help pupils move from year group to year group and then onto secondary school are extremely good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has successfully managed the many staff changes and focused the school on moving forward. She is supported well in her efforts by the effective deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The very high return of questionnaires from staff indicates they feel that they are valued members of the school community. A rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the work of the school is well established. It is used effectively by senior and middle leaders to drive improvement and ensure that targets set are achieved. The effective governing body holds the school to account. Its members are fully involved in shaping the future direction of the school and they monitor well the quality of provision. The school complies with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety, and child protection and all staff understand what is expected of them. Any concerns are swiftly acted upon and very well-targeted support and guidance put in place for individuals.

The school promotes equality of opportunity and community cohesion well, and has good arrangements to tackle discrimination. The headteacher and staff have built extremely good relationships with members of the immediate community, including partnerships with the Church. Opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of global issues are good and those to forge links with wider national communities are increasing. Good partnerships, particularly with local schools, enhance the quality of pupils' learning and contribute well to teachers' professional development.

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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
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
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

Children are warmly welcomed into the Reception class. Very effective induction arrangements ensure that they settle quickly and follow routines. Children are safe and cared for exceptionally well. As a result of good teaching and learning, children make good progress. By the time they enter Year 1, children are working securely within the expected levels for their age, with a few above this. Children have very trusting relationships with adults, behave well, play happily together and enjoy learning. Throughout the phase, adults take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and this develops their spoken and imaginative language well. Overall, there is a good range of planned activities that have an appropriate balance between those children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. However, just occasionally, too much emphasis is placed on teaching the whole class and this limits children's opportunities to develop their independent learning skills. Sometimes, both indoors and outside, the range of activities is not wide enough and tasks do not always have a clear enough purpose. Consequently, on these occasions children's learning is more limited. Adults carefully record their regular and accurate assessments of children's achievements. Good partnerships are established with parents and carers and a few regularly provide valued help in the Reception class. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Teamwork is strong. Leaders have a good view of what to do next and good plans to develop the phase further.

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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

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors received an above-average response to the inspection questionnaire. Most of the parents and carers indicate a positive view about all aspects of the school's work. Inspection findings support these positive views. A few parents and carers consider that the school does not help them support their children's learning or take their suggestions and concerns fully into account and that it fails to deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Through their extensive observations and discussions with pupils and staff, the inspectors found the school has effective procedures for managing pupils' behaviour. They also found the school has efficient systems for seeking and acting upon parents' and carers' views and for providing information to help them support their children's learning. A few parents and carers expressed the views that the school is not led and managed effectively and that their children do not make enough progress. Inspectors found that leadership and management at all levels is effective. Inspectors judge that in lessons, although more-able pupils are given work that is more difficult than their peers, it does not always have sufficient depth to enable them to attain the higher levels.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Oswald's CofE Aided Primary School 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 73 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 132 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	67	21	29	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	71	18	25	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	45	30	41	5	7	3	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	49	24	33	8	11	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	41	56	20	27	5	7	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	58	19	26	9	12	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	56	28	38	4	5	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)	33	45	26	36	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	52	23	32	5	7	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	44	21	29	11	15	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	47	22	30	8	11	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	40	55	20	27	6	8	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	63	16	22	6	8	3	4

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 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	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 pupils' 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.



24 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Oswald's CofE Aided Primary School, Chester, CH1 6LG

I am writing to thank you for your friendly welcome and the help you gave the inspection team when we came to inspect your school. St Oswald's is a good school and some aspects are outstanding. These are some of the things we found out.

- Your behaviour is good and you all get along with each other. Adults take extremely good care of you and help you to learn how to stay safe. You all have an impressive understanding how to live healthy lifestyles.
- You told us you have lots of activities after lessons, interesting visits, visitors, and overnight stays, and these help you learn many new things. We agree.
- You all have many responsibilities and take part in lots of events in the local community and the Church. We agree with those of you who told us that these opportunities help you to become more confident.
- You make good progress and by the time you leave school at the end of Year 6 you attain standards that are above average in English and mathematics.
- Nearly all of you told us that staff teach you well, lessons are fun and you enjoy learning. We agree. Some of you told us that your work is not hard enough. We have asked your school to ensure that more difficult work is given to those of you who learn more quickly.
- The children in the Reception class have a good start to their education. They enjoy learning, but sometimes there are not enough fun activities for them to choose from indoors and outside. We have asked your school to make sure there are always lots of exciting tasks for children to try for themselves.
- The headteacher and all other staff work closely with the governing body to carefully plan what needs to be improved.

Thank you again for helping with the inspection. In lessons, please keep trying your best at all times and good luck with your road safety campaign.

Yours sincerely

Denise Shields

Lead inspector

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