

Parish CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104793
Local Authority	St. Helens
Inspection number	336366
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2010
Reporting inspector	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Shaw
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Ryder
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons, observing 8 teachers and all classes. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Questionnaires from 43 parents and carers, 71 pupils and 28 staff were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. The inspectors looked in detail at the following.

- Whether the progress made by pupils is sufficiently good to merit the school's claim for good achievement, given the variations in standards in Key Stage 2 since 2007.
- How challenging teaching is across the school, especially for the more able.
- How vigorously the school is working to improve attendance.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils at this smaller-than-average primary school are of White British heritage, with very few who speak English as an additional language. The intake of the school has changed significantly since the last inspection. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is well above average. The number of pupils who leave or join the school at various times of the year is high, especially in Key Stage 2. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school has several awards, including Healthy Schools status and a gold International School Award. The school operates a before- and after-school club and a Nurture Group, which takes pupils from other schools. There is also an independently organised pre-school facility on site. This is inspected separately and the report can be found on the Ofsted website.

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. It has some outstanding features and makes a considerable difference to the lives of the young people in its care. Almost all parents and carers are highly supportive of all aspects of its work.

Changes in the intake of the school since the last inspection have been managed well and the school is moving forward under the good leadership of the headteacher and staff. The children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress because of the good leadership, teaching, curriculum and excellent care provided there. The pupils in the main school also make at least good progress from their starting points, including the many that join the school part way through a year. Pupils with special educational needs make outstanding progress. Attainment on leaving the school is broadly average, but improving rapidly.

The teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. However, some teaching remains satisfactory, rather than good, with weaknesses in the pupils' speaking and listening skills, in the match of activities to the pupils' needs and too much teacher direction. The curriculum is good, especially in its support for the pupils' personal development and in building their understanding of the wider world. Attendance is broadly average. The pupils demonstrate an excellent involvement in the school and community life and the school's promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The pupils clearly enjoy their time in school, behaviour is good and the pupils say that they feel very safe and highly valued. There is a delightfully warm, positive, tolerant and purposeful atmosphere in the school, created by outstanding care, guidance and support. This is helped by excellent partnership working with a wide range of organisations to meet the pupils' needs. Governance is satisfactory, though the governing body's awareness of the school's performance and its role in supporting and challenging it are underdeveloped. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well through its self-evaluation and, despite the change in intake, has maintained the good progress of the pupils. It has improved aspects of its provision and the personal development outcomes for the pupils since the last inspection. As a result, its capacity for sustained improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment across the school by spreading existing best practice in teaching and learning to all classes, especially in respect of:
 - providing a better match of lesson activities to the needs of all pupils

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- developing the pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that they are able to learn more effectively from adults and each other in lessons
- promoting more effective independent learning by allowing the pupils to demonstrate their understanding more effectively without adult support.
- Develop strategies to improve the attendance of some pupils so that their learning is not disrupted.
- Develop the governing body's awareness of the school's performance and its role in supporting and challenging the school's work.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The children enter the Reception class with knowledge, understanding and skills that overall are below what is typically expected for their age, but this varies year on year and they are often well below. Significant numbers of pupils enter the school throughout Key Stage 1 and especially Key Stage 2, very often with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspection evidence from lesson observations and work scrutiny and the school's own good tracking systems shows that the large majority of pupils make good progress from their starting points, as they move up the school. The learning is good in the majority of lessons because of the good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Most pupils acquire new knowledge, develop their understanding and learn new skills well. Pupils who join the school part way through a year make good progress, as do the pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress because of the additional support they receive. Overall attainment is broadly average by the time pupils leave in Year 6, but has varied since the last inspection, reflecting the different abilities of year groups. Within most of the current year groups, attainment is above average and high in geography. The vast majority of pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets the school has set. Given their starting points, this represents good achievement.

The pupils say they feel very safe in school and they have a very good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, reflecting the school's Healthy Schools status. Behaviour is often excellent, but there is some low-level disruption in weaker lessons. Attendance, for the vast majority, is good and improving, but it is average overall, due to the low attendance of a minority of pupils. The progress pupils make in developing key skills in literacy and numeracy is good, often from low starting points, and their knowledge and use of information and communication technology is good. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the daily running of the school through the active school council and as Eco-Officers and buddies to support each other. The pupils are highly involved in supporting the local community. The school makes great efforts in promoting the pupils' wider understanding of the world and in developing their personal qualities; their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. As a result, the pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their 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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	3
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?

The quality of teaching and use of assessment to support learning are good overall. There is some outstanding teaching, but also some that is only satisfactory. In the best lessons, the teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and use this and different teaching methods successfully to make learning interesting and relevant. The teaching assistants are very effective in supporting learners who need additional help. A strength within the best lessons is the use made of assessment guidelines to help the pupils understand what level they are working at and what they need to do to improve. As a result, more-able learners are now being challenged fully. The pupils' understanding of their learning targets is often very good and helps them to make good progress. However, in the small number of satisfactory lessons, these practices are not as well developed. The match of activities to the pupils' needs is not as successful, the teachers talk too much and independent learning is not fostered so well. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are not so well developed in these lessons and, as a result, the pupils are not able to learn so effectively from each other or from adults.

The good curriculum is planned carefully and is responsive to most pupils' needs. Provision for gifted and able pupils is developing well through partnership working and beginning to show an impact. There is a strong focus upon literacy and numeracy and the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities that promote pupils' personal development and health very well. German is taught and, together with very good

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geographical studies, contributes well to the pupils' understanding of the wider world. The school has begun to develop aspects of its cross-curricular provision and is moving towards an approach that identifies the key skills which need to be delivered across all subjects. The school recognises that its work here is still in development and its impact not yet proven.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are outstanding. The success of this provision is seen in the often excellent progress in their personal development by the time the pupils leave the school. Transition arrangements for pupils joining and leaving the school are very good. The needs of those joining part way through a key stage are assessed rapidly and, if necessary, support programmes are put in place. The role of the Nurture Group is highly effective in this respect and much valued by parents and carers and other schools. The school works very well with a wide range of agencies to support the pupils in their learning. The before- and after-school club is well attended and it extends the pupils' learning well through structured activity sessions. The school provides a very good range of family learning opportunities as part of its extended provision. It has worked increasing hard since the last inspection to improve attendance. Previously high levels of persistent absence have been eliminated and improvements in overall attendance have recently begun to be seen.

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 has a clear vision for the school and is driving improvement forward with skill and determination. She communicates this ambition well to the staff, parents and carers. The challenges provided by the changing nature of the school's intake are being met well. Assessment and tracking systems have been restructured and regular pupil-progress meetings introduced to target underachievement. The use of assessment to shape teaching has been improved, but is not yet embedded across all year groups. The curriculum team leaders are taking on greater responsibility for their areas. The senior leaders have a very good understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school through their self-evaluation and excellent plans for driving forward improvement. However, the role of the governing body is underdeveloped within this and, as a result, its effectiveness in supporting and challenging the school is satisfactory rather than good.

The school works extremely well with its partners to bring capacity to the school that it would not otherwise have; significant partnerships promote the learning and well-being of the pupils. The school engages well with parents and carers but realises that it still needs

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to reach some parents and carers regarding attendance issues. The promotion of equal opportunities is good, with gaps in the pupils' performance closing rapidly, though some variation in the quality of teaching remains. Discrimination is extremely rare and, when encountered, is dealt with very effectively. The school has carried out an extensive audit of its social, religious and ethnic context and has in place an excellent programme of planned actions to support community cohesion. This is outstanding at school, local and wider levels, reflecting the school's International School Award. The pupils' work in communicating with troops on active service overseas has also recently been recognised through the award of a NATO medal. Safeguarding practices are good, with good practice evident particularly with site safety.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good induction arrangements ensure that the children and their parents and carers receive a warm welcome to the school. The children settle happily in the safe environment and learn and play together well. Throughout their time in the Reception class, they make good progress across all areas of learning from their starting points, especially in personal development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing because of the intensive support provided through activities on letters and sounds and effective strategies for developing early writing. The quality of teaching is good, in an environment that both challenges the children and caters well for their needs. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Much progress has been made within the setting since the last inspection. Outdoor resources have been upgraded and new ways of working have been introduced, which are being embedded with new staff. The teachers assess the children's progress frequently and well, using the information to plan the next steps in the children's learning. There is a good balance between activities that the teachers direct and

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those that the children choose for themselves. Safeguarding measures are good and the welfare and support provided are excellent. Links with the Nurture Group for children moving into Year 1 are very effective and ensure that the children's needs continue to be met. Staff training is up to date and there are good plans in place for driving forward further improvement.

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

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are very happy with all aspects of the school. They consider that the school provides a very safe and caring environment for their children and that it is well led and managed. The inspection evidence supports with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Parish CofE 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 185 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	86	6	14	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	27	63	13	30	2	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	81	8	19	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	74	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	70	12	28	0	0	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)	31	72	10	23	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	74	11	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	70	12	28	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	65	15	35	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	77	10	23	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	86	6	14	0	0	0	0

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.



10 December 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Parish CofE Primary School, St Helens, WA10 1LW

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave me and the team when we inspected your school recently. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do. You told us a lot of interesting things about your school and you are clearly very proud of it.

Parish Church of England Primary is a good school. It has some outstanding features. You get a good start to your learning in the Reception class and make good progress there as a result of the good teaching and care you receive. This continues into the main school, where good teaching and the subjects that you cover in lessons mean that you leave at the end of Year 6 having made good progress. Those of you who find learning difficult often make very good progress. This is because of the excellent care, guidance and support provided by the school. Your understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle is very good. You say you feel very safe and enjoy your time in school. Your behaviour is good and your involvement in school life and the local and wider communities is excellent. Well done! Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and, as a result, your preparation for the next stage of your education is also good. The headteacher and staff work well together to make your school successful, helped by very good links with partner organisations. I have asked the school to consider the following points to help it to improve further.

- Ensure that all teaching and learning are as good as in the best lessons.
- Develop more ways to improve attendance.
- Develop the role of the governing body in supporting the school's work.

You can help by telling your teachers how you learn best, if you have any problems and by attending regularly. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Dr Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Lead inspector

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