

St Elisabeth's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106110
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	377355
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Leszek Iwaskow HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Christine Waterfield
Headteacher	Shirley Tootell
Date of previous school inspection	23 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons to include all the teachers in the school. Inspectors also held meetings with a local authority representative, members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding, data and analysis about pupils' current and past performance, curriculum planning, subject leaders' files, pupils' work and monitoring reports. They also scrutinised 133 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How well pupils attain and progress through the school, particularly in relation to the performance of boys.
- The reasons behind the dip in attendance last year.
- How well embedded and consistently applied is the use of assessment data, tracking and target-setting strategies.
- The impact of assessment and target-setting on raising standards, improving teaching and learning and matching work to pupils' needs.
- The impact of the curriculum in helping pupils achieve and enjoy their learning.
- How effective the school's development planning is in securing long-term improvements.

Information about the school

St Elisabeth's is an average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds although numbers from other ethnic groups are increasing. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average. The school, a grade II listed building, is the centre of a 50-street community. The school is involved in the School Sport Community partnership, was re-accredited with the Inclusion Quality Mark in 2010 and more recently has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership award.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'St Elisabeth's is not just a school - it is a community and our extended family.' There is no greater praise than this ringing endorsement from the parents and carers. This is a highly successful school which provides a first class education for all of the pupils in its care. The journey has not been easy, but the vision of the headteacher has provided inspiration and a clear direction which is shared by staff and governors. Despite the success there is also a desire to continue to improve and build on the achievements already secured. There has been noticeable improvement in attainment since the previous inspection, particularly in English. This improvement has been well supported by the development of rigorous tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress linked to focussed intervention strategies. As a result, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least good and often outstanding progress. The attainment gap between boys and girls has been closed with boys now often outperforming girls.

Inspectors observed mainly good and outstanding lessons which reflected the very good generic teaching skills of the staff. They are very confident in delivering high quality lessons in English and mathematics where they have received frequent and valuable training. Inexperienced staff are also well supported. The school has placed great emphasis on improving teaching and provision in English and mathematics. However, it recognises that curriculum delivery through topic work, although supporting pupils' literacy and numeracy skills very well, does not always lead to outstanding teaching in subjects other than mathematics and English.

Both pupils and parents hold the school in very high regard. The school nurtures pupils' social, emotional and personal development extremely well. Parents and carers are full of praise for this aspect of the school's work, its promotion of academic achievement, and its role in the community. Behaviour around the school and in lessons is exemplary. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance, after the recent dip, is once again continuing to improve. A culture of care is evident in the day-to-day work of the school and in the very positive relationships which have been engendered. Pupils feel very safe. They get an exceptionally good start to their schooling in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular activities on offer. These support their personal development and enrich their learning. Pupils have nothing but praise for the quality of the care and guidance and the experiences they receive. 'My school is like amazing shooting stars!' and 'I

will be sad to leave our school because I have learnt so much,' are just two of the many positive comments made to inspectors.

St Elisabeth's has come a long way in recent years. There is a real pride in what has been achieved and a real desire to become even better. The school is a shining example of the success that can be produced with dedicated staff, a clear vision, hard work and a desire to improve the lives of the children in its care. As a parent summarised 'On a personal level, I couldn't ask for more, my children are receiving a fabulous start in life.' The capacity to sustain improvement is outstanding.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Re-structure the curriculum, particularly topic work, to:
 - provide a secure platform, to enhance subject knowledge as well as to continue to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and other key skills
 - empower teachers to continue to develop their ability to plan and teach effectively across the full range of subjects
 - make best use of a wide range of current and relevant resources to further enhance learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

At St. Elisabeth's, pupils thrive and succeed. As one parent/carer stated 'St Elisabeth's school gives all their pupils the means to strive and flourish throughout their lives'. This highlights the outstanding progress their children make in many aspects of their schooling. On entry to Nursery or Reception pupils arrive with skills and starting points below age-related expectations. The school has focused on making a difference and there is a clear pattern of consistent improvement. In national tests in Year 6, attainment is high, especially in English. The number of pupils attaining Level 5 is also above the national average. Given pupils' starting points, this represents excellent progress. The focus on engaging boys and making sure they don't fall behind has borne fruit and boys are currently outperforming girls.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their feedback to inspectors was unanimously positive. Comments such as 'I think my school is a fabulous place to learn and grow up in' were commonplace. After a dip last year, the zero tolerance, particularly in relation to persistent absence, is having an impact and attendance is improving to previous above average levels. Pupils feel very safe and secure in a very caring environment. Parents and carers are also very positive about the support and care their children receive. In their own words, 'Here at the school, teachers don't just do their jobs – they care!' The school is an orderly and welcoming community. Behaviour around the school is frequently exemplary. Pupils are polite and inquisitive. They show respect for each other and also for their teachers and other adults they come into contact with both inside and outside school. In their view, 'The staff are stupendous' 'trustworthy and helpful.' The school makes the importance of leading healthy lifestyles very clear and promotes this through regular exercise and raising health issues with pupils, parents and carers. The school is held in very high regard by the local community. 'Our children are safe happy and

extremely well educated. There is no better school for our children' is a quotation which reflects the unanimous view of the parents. However, St Elisabeth's is more than that – it is a hub of the community. Pupils participate in many community events, for example in art projects in Broadstone and Holdsworth Mills and in environmental work in Reddish. Equally, the community is welcomed into the school and amenities are used by church and community groups such as local foster parents and carers. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social and cultural development is also very well nurtured from an early age. They have a strong sense of right and wrong and inspectors noted how they supported and encouraged each other very well. For example, Year 6 pupils in the 'playground squad' work with, and help, younger children playing games and dancing. The school ensures that pupils value the diversity in culture and background. Sharing and caring are core values which exemplify the inclusive nature of the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	1
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In English and mathematics lessons, the quality of teaching is good and frequently outstanding. There has been a relentless focus on improving provision, especially in these key subjects. Much time, effort and training have been expended in ensuring that teachers are confident in delivering a range of strategies to promote learning. Less experienced teachers are being supported well to develop their classroom expertise. In developing language, a strong emphasis is placed on phonics where pupils connect the sounds of spoken English with letters. This was demonstrated in one lesson where the teacher had spelt 'horrendous' with one 'r'. Quick as a flash, before she had time to correct it, a seven-year-old pupil had identified the mistake. When asked how he knew, he said 'I sounded it out in my head and it was obvious it had two r's'. There is also a strong focus on planning, questioning and high quality differentiation. For example, in an excellent Year 6 lesson where pupils were studying the poem 'Jabberwocky', very good questioning engaged pupils and encouraged them to unpick each verse, analyse what it meant and share their thoughts about the poem. Excellent teaching was also observed in music and lessons

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

which supported pupils' personal development. The school is aware that in other areas of the curriculum where teachers are less secure, such as in topic work, teaching needs to be developed with the same relentless determination that has seen significant improvements elsewhere.

Monitoring of pupils' progress is considered fundamental and has been a focus of development and improvement since the previous inspection. Procedures are clearly established and linked to appropriate intervention and support strategies which have supported improvements very well, especially in English and mathematics. Marking is exemplary and linked to clear and specific targets for improvement. Pupils are aware of these and act on the advice given.

The curriculum is strongly focussed on ensuring that pupils are well prepared for future life by being able to read and write with confidence, make mathematical calculations with accuracy and develop well-rounded social and interpersonal skills. Although the full curriculum is offered, a few subjects, taught through topics, such as history and geography are used more to support basic skills such as literacy rather than specific subject knowledge and understanding. To some extent, this is compensated by the wide range of enrichment activities which contributes to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. For example, visits to Stockport's air raid shelters support learning about the Home Front during World War II and orienteering activities support the development of mapping skills. There is a strong focus on outdoor learning and all pupils participate in a residential experience before they leave for secondary school.

There is a strong focus on inclusivity and the school provides a welcoming environment for all the pupils in its care. The school lives up to its aim that it is a place 'where everyone is valued highly and where tolerance, honesty, co-operation and mutual respect for others are fostered.' As several parents remarked, 'The strong commitment to include all pupils is portrayed for all to see – right from the school entrance through to the classrooms.' There is a clear focus on well-structured support and good arrangements are provided for pupils with particular needs which make a significant difference to the lives of the pupils who have learning difficulties/ and/or disabilities. Monitoring procedures, early intervention and very good and focussed support ensure that these pupils make at least good progress and at a similar rate to that their peers. A parent identified the big turn around her daughter has experienced since she joined the school: 'Wow! What a change, she is off her behaviour plan, grades are getting better, she loves to go to school and is like a different child.' Parents and carers are extremely happy with the care provided by the school. They feel that they are kept well informed about their children's' progress and welfare. Transition arrangements into the nursery and on exit from Year 6 are very 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	1
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 school makes every child and parent feel special' is a comment which sums up the inspirational impact that the headteacher has had on the development of the school. There has been an uncompromising focus since the previous inspection on improving standards and outcomes for all pupils. These are high, especially in English. The headteacher is very well supported by her leadership team, the governors and the whole school community who share her vision of 'excellence for all'. Morale is high. Rigorous self-evaluation processes are in place and these contribute to the very good capacity for further improvement. There is a clear agenda of step-by-step improvement which is managed and resourced well. The focus has been on ensuring that the basics are firmly in place and outcomes in English and mathematics and the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress have been real success stories. There is also a clear understanding that other areas, such as topic work, are to be tackled with the same rigour in the coming months. Members of the governing body are supportive and committed to driving through improvements. They ensure compliance with legal requirements. Relationships are mutually positive.

Parents and carers are full of praise about the work of the school and consider it to be a safe haven for their children. 'The education is second to none – the teachers have time to listen and staff are very approachable' is a reflection on this highly-positive relationship. Communication is excellent. Parents and carers receive regular newsletters and updates about their child's progress via letters, the school website and e-mail. Where individual parents or carers have raised concerns, the school has worked in partnership with them to try to address those issues. Very good systems are in place to safeguard and promote the welfare of the pupils in the school and interagency working is highly effective. The school plays its part in helping all pupils feel that they are members of a cohesive and caring community. A common vision ensures that all members of the school community feel part of, not only the school, but of the local, national and international community. Links with schools in Bezier (France), Juliet John School in Ghana and a contrasting school in Manchester further enhance pupils' understanding of their role as world citizens. Overall, the school provides a first class education for all of its pupils and gives excellent value for money. A parent summed this up clearly by stating, 'My mind is always at rest knowing that my child is in the best possible school not just academically but emotionally too'.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children receive a very good start to their school life; most enter the nursery with skills below those typical for their age. Boys often enter well below, especially in their emotional development. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have made good, and sometimes very good, progress from their starting points, including in their personal development. They develop good skills in literacy and numeracy with which to transfer into Year 1, reflecting the high aspirations of their teachers and the high quality of the teaching and support offered. Teaching is firmly rooted in expert knowledge of the learning and development needs of the children in their care. Adults’ impressive knowledge of Early Years Foundation Stage outcomes and requirements leads to a rich and varied experience that meets the needs of the children. Activities are planned very well and strong adult/child relationships enable children to develop good habits of learning. The outdoor environment has been enhanced since the previous inspection, despite the restrictions imposed by listed building status. This supports children’s experiences very well.

Assessment is rigorous, with children’s progress regularly and carefully monitored. There are very effective partnerships with parents, carers and partner settings to ensure that important information is shared to support children’s learning and development. This was echoed by one parent who commented, ‘My child has never come home with a complaint or bad word about the school or staff. He is always excited to go to nursery and I am always able to speak to any of the staff if needs be.’ Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strongly focussed, well organised and displays a most secure knowledge of how this area of learning may be developed further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	1
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires returned was well above average. Parents and carers were unanimously supportive of the school and no significant concerns were raised. The care the school provides and the progress their children are making were particularly credited and inspectors agree with these views. Their findings are included in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Elisabeth's Church of England 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	104	78	28	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	115	86	17	13	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	104	78	28	21	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	109	82	23	17	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	110	83	22	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	100	75	32	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	92	69	40	30	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)	84	63	37	28	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	98	74	34	26	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	89	67	37	28	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	85	64	44	33	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	103	77	28	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	112	84	20	15	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Elisabeth's Church of England Primary School, Stockport, SK5 6BL

Thank you for making me and my colleagues welcome in your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your experiences in lessons, what you enjoyed and how you were treated and looked after. You frequently asked us what we thought about your school and this letter is our reply to tell you what we have found. We observed lessons in many of your classes, talked to you and your teachers and looked at a range of work and documentation. This led us to the conclusion that what you told us was true and that your school is outstanding and, in your words, 'simply the best!'

You, and your parents and carers, have every right to be justifiably proud of your school and of what you have achieved. You do really well in learning to read and write; you have developed many skills, including the ability to use numbers accurately and; you really try hard in all of your lessons. When we spoke to you, you were very polite and respectful and keen to tell us what is good about your school and how you are very happy there. You feel very safe and secure and think 'the staff are stupendous'. They really help and care for you.

I know that everyone wants the school to get even better and we have suggested that perhaps Mrs Tootell and the staff can think of ways to find more time to do topic work in more detail. This will enable you to apply your really good learning skills to subjects such as design and technology, history and geography and make these lessons even more worthwhile and interesting.

With your help and cooperation, I am sure the school will continue to provide you with a caring and supportive environment in which to learn. On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow
Her Majesty's Inspector

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