

St Mary's CofE Primary School High Crompton

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105711
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	377285
Inspection dates	26–27 March 2012
Lead inspector	Alan Parkinson

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Butler
Headteacher	Pamela Hartley
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alan Parkinson
Neil MacKenzie

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 7 teachers and visited 15 lessons. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, pupil progress data, pupils' workbooks, attendance data and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. The inspectors analysed 69 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those returned by pupils and staff. They looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) but insufficient responses had been received to show results for this school.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds although the number of pupils of different minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average. The school population has very little mobility. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and achievement. The school has gained the Healthy Schools status, Platinum Tooth Friendly School Award, Bronze Eco Schools Award and the Activemark status. There is a before- and after-school club that is managed by a private provider.

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

Key Findings

- This is a good school with some notable strengths. Attainment is well above the national average, particularly in English and pupils demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning. It is a good rather than an outstanding school because while teaching is good overall, some teaching is satisfactory and pupils' attainment and achievement in mathematics are lower than in reading and writing.
- Pupil's achievement overall is good. Children in the Reception class make good progress across all areas of learning because of the good teaching that they receive. This continues throughout Key Stage 1 where pupils make good progress, particularly in reading, which is a strength of the school. At Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is also good. However, pupils make better progress in their reading and writing at Key Stage 2 than they do in their mathematics although this is still above the national average.
- Pupils, including those who are disabled or with special educational needs, make good progress because the overall quality of teaching is good. However, occasionally in lessons, teachers do not provide pupils with tasks that enable them to make the most progress either because they have not fully understood the task or because it is too challenging. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children achieve well because the continuous provision is well structured with a wide range of activities in both the indoor and outdoor environments. The school's stimulating learning environment promotes pupils' positive attitudes towards their learning and supports a curriculum that is imaginative and creative in its approach. Pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs are very effectively supported in their learning and development.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe in school and parents and carers overwhelmingly support this view. This is a very inclusive school. Pupils are sensitive to each other's needs and opinions, and are kind and respectful to staff and to visitors.
- Senior leaders and the governing body know the school well. They have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement which is based upon accurate

school self-evaluation. The headteacher and deputy headteacher demonstrate an outstanding commitment and determination to realise the vision to continually improve pupils' personal and academic development. The leadership of teaching is effective and teachers receive regular feedback on their performance together with advice on how this can be improved further. The curriculum provision is outstanding. It is very well planned to engage and promote positive attitudes of individual pupils towards their learning and supports the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the achievement of pupils in mathematics to ensure that standards in this subject match those in reading by ensuring that there are timely interventions during lessons to address any misconceptions and maximise learning opportunities and progress.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by extending the best practice that exists in the school and ensure that it is consistently applied to all aspects of teaching.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge typical for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning. The development of speaking and listening in the Early Years Foundation Stage is used as an important stage of literacy development with the use of books having a high profile.

Good progress continues through Key Stage 1, so that by the end of the Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the levels expected with reading significantly above the national average. At the end of Year 6 attainment is above national averages in mathematics and is significantly above in English, including reading. Overall, through Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress. However, progress in reading and writing is higher than in mathematics. Parents and carers are accurate in their positive views that their child is making good progress.

Through the school's self-evaluation and rigorous monitoring system to track the progress of pupils, the school recognises that the development of mathematical skills is lower than expected and as such has appropriately identified mathematics as an area for improvement. Inspection findings confirm that the recent strategies implemented by the school have shown some improvements in pupils' progress in mathematics. However, it is too soon for the school to show that these strategies have demonstrated sustained improvement in achievement in mathematics. An emphasis on improving pupils' reading skills has had a significant impact on raising pupils' attainment in reading throughout the school.

Teachers provide generally good feedback through their marking of pupils' work, in accordance with the school's assessment policy, so pupils know what next steps they need to take in order to improve. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the

learning of pupils, particularly those who are disabled or with special educational needs, to enable them to make progress that is at least consistent with all other pupils.

Quality of teaching

In Reception class there is a range of activities for continuous provision with a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. The children are fully engaged in activities that develop a wide range of skills that promote self-confidence and self-esteem. A well-planned and systematic development of phonics across the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 enables children to work at and achieve age-related expectations, with some exceeding them.

Pupils of all abilities and groupings adopt very positive attitudes to learning. This is promoted through a very creative curriculum that enables them to become highly engaged in their learning activities. For example, Year 2 pupils demonstrate great use of imagination and high levels of enthusiasm when developing their descriptive writing skills by writing about an 'alien' they had found. This enthusiasm and excitement continued into playtime when pupils were keen to show where they had found the 'alien egg' in an area now taped off with 'Police Line – Do Not Cross'. The school's effective classroom displays and displays throughout the school that celebrate pupils' work and achievements create a very positive learning environment.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the effective teaching of reading highlights the impact of the school's programme of professional development. All teachers have high expectations for the pupils and provide work which on occasions is too challenging and therefore tends to impede progress. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory and less effective, teachers do not check consistently what pupils are learning, so do not adjust the work to meet their needs sufficiently to enable them to make the most progress.

All responses to the questionnaires for parents and carers showed that the school helps their child to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics and helps parents and carers to support their child's learning. Awareness and development of modern foreign language skills is delivered through Spanish, which is used frequently by all teachers, including Reception class, in various lessons throughout the school and as the welcome in morning worship. Throughout the school the impact of teaching on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident as all pupils readily join in the prayers that are said in class at the end of the morning session, prior to lunch, and at the end of the school day.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The pupil's consistently thoughtful behaviour continues to be a major strength of the school and makes an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian ethos and ensures that all pupils' learn and thrive in a positive and welcoming atmosphere. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children feel secure and are happy. They enjoy all their learning environments and play well together. Pupils say they feel very safe in school due to the secure site and adult presence and this view is supported by parents and carers. They have a well-developed awareness of e-safety and how they should use the internet. They say that there is little, if any, bullying of any kind and that they know what to do if they have any concerns.

Assemblies are used as opportunities for pupils to come together to worship in a spirit of reflection and celebration. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and have extremely good relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils have the opportunity to take on positions of responsibility, such as duties in the school office when staff are at lunch, acting as 'buddies' to others at playtime and to younger children when they join the school or as members of the school council. The school takes account of pupils' views. For example, following pupil suggestions a trim trail has been created in the outside play area and is very popular and well used by pupils. Attendance is high compared to the national average and this reflects well on pupils very positive attitudes towards their learning, enjoyment and engagement in school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a very effective senior leadership team and together with the effective governing body promote pupils' learning successfully and serve its community well. They have high expectations and have set a very clear vision of school improvement over the last three years, which is shared by staff. The school has accurately identified its strengths and areas for improvement through its effective self-evaluation and has used this knowledge well to improve teaching, particularly of reading. The school's middle managers, who form the school's management forum, have made a significant contribution to the development of the school's curriculum. All staff feel that the school is well led and managed. A typical comment is, 'School leadership works tirelessly to ensure children at this school get the best of everything'. Parents and carers speak very positively about the school. This view is supported by the overwhelmingly positive responses to the questionnaires returned by parents and carers. These responses also showed that the school keeps them well informed.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good because of the accurate understanding of children's needs and the use of this to inform planning. The continuous provision in the Reception class is well structured with a wide range of activities in different learning environments. Themed events, such as 'Science Week' add interest and variety to the curriculum. All classes from Years 2 to 6 visit the church for the 'Experience Easter' activity that provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to experience 'awe and wonder' resulting in effective questioning from pupils about personal values.

Music plays an important part in school life with a very strong connection to the local church where the school choir sings regularly. The range of extra-curricular activities is extensive and is carefully planned to promote and enhance the excellent curriculum. The development of skills to promote resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness, reciprocity and confident communicators is valued by the pupils. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and cared for, particularly by the experienced support staff, to ensure that they make progress that is at least consistent with all other groups of pupils. The school is very inclusive and promotes equality of opportunity well and tackles discrimination effectively on the rare occasions it may occur. Safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies meet national requirements.

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 (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.

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.



28 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mary's CofE Primary School High Crompton, Oldham, OL2 7PP

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us at lunchtime.

St Mary's is a good school and all the staff work really well as a team. You feel safe in school and your behaviour and attitudes towards learning are outstanding and your attendance is high. Teaching is good but we have asked your school to make your lessons even better. You do your best work in reading and English and we would like you to improve your standards in mathematics. On some occasions, when you have not fully understood the activity or work that you have been given or it is too challenging, you do not do as much work and therefore do not make enough progress. We have asked your teachers to keep a careful check on what you are learning so that they can help you overcome any problems with your work.

We enjoyed watching you learn and we thought your singing in assembly was wonderful. The curriculum you follow is outstanding and the project activities such as 'science week' and the school trips that you have make it even more interesting and enjoyable. The way the school promotes your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. I hope you keep on working hard so you can continue to play a big part in trying to make your school even better. Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection and for your kindness and courtesy to us. We wish all of you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Parkinson
Lead inspector

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