

St Philip's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106126
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	395659
Inspection dates	4–5 July 2012
Lead inspector	Ray Biglin

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marian Slee
Headteacher	Bernadette Singleton
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
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Introduction

Inspection team

Ray Biglin

Henry Moreton

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors watched a range of subjects and observed 14 lessons taught by seven teachers. In addition, inspectors heard pupils read in Year 2 and Year 6 and scrutinised pupils' workbooks across all years. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and the Chair of the Governing body. Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including self-evaluation information, records of pupils' attainment and progress and safeguarding documentation. The views of staff, pupils and 95 parents and carers were considered as expressed through the returned questionnaires.

Information about the school

The school is a smaller than average primary school that serves a largely White British community from the surrounding area. There are more boys than girls on roll, most notably in Years 3 to 6. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The school meets the government's current floor standard which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. Since the previous inspection, after a long period of stability, there have been a number of staff changes.

The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark. Since 2008, the school has been part of the University of Nottingham Postgraduate Teacher Training in Outstanding Schools project.

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. It is not yet outstanding because there is insufficient outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils' achievement in both English and mathematics is consistently good or better. It is a happy school where pupils and staff thrive in a mutually respectful learning environment.
- The achievement of all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is good overall. Pupils typically achieve better in Key Stage 2 than they do in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, especially in reading and writing. Attainment is above average when pupils leave school. Mathematics, although improving, is not yet as strong as English.
- Teaching is good overall, but there are also examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and manage their classrooms extremely well so that pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. In the best lessons, there is a brisk pace and pupils are engaged fully and stretched to reach their full potential. Occasionally, this is not the case, because teachers do not always extend pupils' learning or provide them sufficient challenge.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding both around the school and in the classroom. Pupils' attitudes to learning and engagement in lessons are excellent. All pupils feel safe and cared for and are highly supportive of one another; for example, older pupils organise an information and communication technology (ICT) club for younger pupils.
- The school is well led by a dedicated headteacher and committed middle leadership team. Data on pupils' progress are used successfully to identify priorities although are not used as effectively to ensure all make consistently good progress. Self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher manages performance and monitors teaching and learning effectively. Although a few variations remain, there is a clear understanding of what teachers need to do to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that achievement in English and mathematics is consistently good or better across the whole school by:
 - tracking more effectively the progression of pupils in Key Stage 1 as they learn their letters and sounds and ensure that this information is used to improve attainment in reading and writing
 - consolidating the recent improvement in mathematics in Key Stage 2 by further developing approaches to problem solving.

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making full use of all available assessment data to ensure that the learning of all pupils, particularly the most able, is extended consistently
 - expanding the range of questioning techniques employed in lessons so as to increase the level of challenge for all pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception class with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. Their progress is satisfactory. It is good in social development because of the focus on sharing and interacting in many ways with adults and other children. The wide variety of experiences also ensures good progress in children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Attainment in these areas of learning is above the expected level. Children reach the expected level in all other areas by the time they join Year 1.

Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good, accelerating as pupils move to Key Stage 2. Attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading and writing and slightly higher in mathematics. Learning in literacy lessons is not always effective because the challenge is not consistently high enough to ensure the more-able pupils make enough progress. As yet, the teaching of letters and sounds is not embedded fully in the teaching of reading. More progress is made in mathematics because of a focus on learning number skills.

Teaching is more challenging in Key Stage 2 and leads to brisker progress, and for some individuals, outstanding progress. Attainment in Year 6 is above average in English and mathematics. An exception to this was a dip in 2011 in mathematics, where some pupils struggled with solving written problems. Changes have been adopted and although not yet embedded fully throughout the school, inspection evidence shows improvement. Current Year 6 pupils are well on course to reach above average attainment in both mathematics and English, including reading. These pupils are highly enthusiastic about learning and eager to do well. They are keen to share their ideas, such as in an English lesson where pupils listened attentively to one another's Romeo and Juliet letters. Pupils work very well cooperatively and supportively.

Disabled pupils and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is because the school has a strong understanding of individual needs and works tirelessly to

ensure that these are met. A particular strength is the intervention work of the teaching assistants who are specifically trained to help pupils develop reading and writing skills.

Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that their children make good progress. As one parent stated, 'The school provides the best possible support for my children's learning journey.'

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers consider that their children are well taught and that teachers 'go that extra mile' to ensure that their children are interested and learn well. Inspectors agree that teaching is good overall and some outstanding teaching was also observed. Teachers know their pupils well and relationships in all classes are exceptionally good. Classrooms are colourful and well ordered. Although overall progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory it is good in some areas and is improving, reflecting the impact of the stimulating environment both inside and outside. Children thrive in an imaginative and purposeful manner and learning is improving in response to stronger teaching. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the pace of lessons is generally good and no time is wasted. All teachers use resources imaginatively including the virtual learning environment. As a result, lessons are generally interesting and stimulating. Teaching has a highly positive impact on pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils show a genuine sense of wonder at the world and a real curiosity to know more. For example, in a Key Stage 1 class, pupils could hardly contain their enthusiasm to look at ants in the ant aquarium!

What sets the outstanding lessons apart is the way teachers make full use of prior knowledge of pupils' abilities to plan lessons that match the needs and interests all pupils. This ensures that all pupils, particularly the most able are challenged and questions are more varied and tailored to individual pupils. This practice is not as successful in all lessons, leading to some lack of challenge especially for the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1. Although pupils respond well to questions these are not always sufficiently probing to extend pupils' learning. Teachers are giving more attention to problem solving in mathematics although this is not yet securely embedded in all classes.

Reading is taught effectively overall. Teachers enthuse pupils and they enjoy reading and are proud of their small library. Although the school follows a structured approach to teaching letters and their sounds, pupils' progress is not always checked closely enough to ensure pupils apply their new skills to their reading and writing.

The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. The school has made a significant investment in the training and support of teaching assistants who support effectively in class and small groups.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils all feel very safe and cared for and are fully confident in the help and support they receive from their teachers and all the other adults who ensure that pupils are happy in school. Every parent and carer who completed a questionnaire believes that the school takes excellent care of their child. The following comment is typical of many. 'We have always been delighted with the level of care and support our children have received during their time at St Philips.' Pupils have a very good understanding of what constitutes an

unsafe situation and clearly understand the potential dangers of the internet and the importance of road safety both as pedestrians and when riding their bikes.

From the time they start in Reception class, pupils are helped to develop the social skills that enable them to interact so well with each other and adults. Throughout the inspection the inspectors were impressed by the courteous and helpful manner of all the pupils. Whether it was holding a door open or asking how we were, pupils went out of their way to make the inspectors welcome and answered all questions patiently! Around the school and in classrooms, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils identify they always behave well and clearly understand how outstanding behaviour benefits their learning. Pupils are highly supportive of one another and respect one another's views and opinions. Pupils are well aware of the dangers of bullying and have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying may take. According to pupils this is very rare but if anything does happen it is quickly and effectively tackled by the school.

Pupils enjoy school and, as a result, attendance is above average. They are keen to take responsibility in all areas of school life. The highly proactive pupil council is proud of the difference it makes especially ensuring provision of earphones for the computers. Additionally, there is a vigilant Eco-committee who ensures that everyone turns off lights when they are not needed!

Leadership and management

The school is led effectively and pupils are at the heart of everything it does. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work extremely closely together. In the aftermath of a number of staff changes, the management skills of teachers with a focus on numeracy and literacy are being developed successfully. The management of performance is good. Teaching is evaluated and is improving although relative shortcomings remain. These are being tackled with professional development and teachers find this helpful and relevant to the school. Data about pupils' progress are used well to identify areas to improve. Success can be seen in the adjustments to mathematics and the consequent rise in attainment. Staff at all levels are involved in self-evaluation and leaders have an accurate picture of priorities. All leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils achieve well and attainment is rising, showing good capacity for improvement.

Members of the governing body have an in-depth understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and provide a good level of challenge and support to the school. They, like all the staff at the school, promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination effectively. Improved teaching and tracking are closing the remaining unevenness in progress especially for the more-able pupils. The literacy intervention programme has been especially beneficial for those pupils struggling with reading. Governors ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and prepares pupils well for the next stage of education. For example, pupils from Year 2 upwards receive specialist language teaching. The school has increased the number of clubs and opportunities for sport and pupils especially enjoy the karate club that runs before school starts. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted successfully with assemblies setting the tone for everyone involved in the school.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.



6 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's Catholic Primary School, Stockport SK2 5LB

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, listening to you read and looking at the work in your books. You were all very helpful and an absolute credit to your families and teachers.

St Philip's is a good school and we know how much you enjoy coming every day because your attendance is above average. We were really impressed with your behaviour both in your classrooms and around the building and playground; in fact we think your behaviour is outstanding! You told us that you feel very safe at school and your parents and carers all agree that the school takes really good care of you. You all know how important it is to keep safe. You all understand the different forms of bullying and think there is hardly any at St Philip's, but if there were the teachers would deal with it quickly and fairly.

Your teachers teach you well and, as a result, you make good progress as you move through the school. By the time you leave school you achieve standards in mathematics and English which are above those we normally see. In order to make your school even better than it already is, I have asked the headteacher and staff to do these things:

- to help you learn to read and write even more quickly in Key Stage 1 by making better use of what they know you have learnt about letters and sounds
- in Key Stage 2, to help you reach even higher standards in mathematics by giving you lots of help solving problems
- make full use of what they know about you as learners and to check that you are always challenged enough to help you all achieve your very best all of the time.

You can help, too, by continuing to work hard and doing your very best. Once again, many thanks for your help and the very best of luck to all of you for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ray Biglin
Lead inspector

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