

St Philip's CE Primary School

Barrow Street, Salford, Manchester, M3 5LF

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- While teaching is improving, it is not leading to all pupils achieving as well as they should because not enough lessons are good or outstanding.
- Pupils' progress is not uniformly good in all year groups, particularly in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils' attainment is improving, but is low in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's improvement plan does not focus clearly on how the school will measure its improvement.
- Senior leaders do not look closely enough at how well pupils achieve in lessons.
- Insufficient numbers of pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work because in some lessons teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve and activities lack pace and challenge.
- Less attention is given to the development of pupils' independent and thinking skills because too often teachers tightly control what pupils do.
- Members of the governing body do not demonstrate the skills needed to hold senior leaders to account effectively enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very positive about the support they receive to access training and gain qualifications.
- Pupils in all classes are happy and well looked after. They feel safe, behave well and have positive attitudes to their learning.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress.
- Pupils in the language units are well supported and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils have clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance for others because relationships are strong.
- There is a clear focus by leaders on improving the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body, and a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including: the school's improvement plan; the tracking of pupils' progress; monitoring reports; the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in nine lessons and parts of six lessons and listened to pupils read. In addition, the headteacher conducted one joint lesson observation with an inspector.
- The inspector met some parents informally at the start of the school day. There were no responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire. (Parent View)

Inspection team

Steve Isherwood, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Angela Shaw

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to eligible for the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school does not meet government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- An above average number of pupils leave or join the school other than at the start of the academic year.
- The majority of pupils are White British with a small but increasing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups.
- There are two resourced units supporting pupils with speech and language difficulties.
- Four new members of staff joined the school at the beginning of September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress at Key Stage 2, particularly in reading and writing by:
 - ensuring that more pupils reach the higher levels in their work
 - increasing the proportion of good and outstanding lessons.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - using assessment information more precisely to plan lessons which are closely matched to pupils' needs, particularly for the more able
 - ensuring greater rigour in the planning of activities to promote pupils' independent and thinking skills.
- Strengthen leadership by:
 - including measurable success criteria and targets for staged improvement in the school improvement plan
 - improving observations of teaching by identifying more clearly the achievement of pupils in lessons
 - developing the skills of governors to challenge and hold senior leaders to account.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment tends to fluctuate year-on-year because of the small numbers of pupils within each cohort, the different composition of each year group and the constant movement of pupils in and out of the school.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities below and often well below those typically seen for their age, particularly in language and communication. They get off to a good start, are well taught and settle quickly. As a result, by the time they enter Year 1, although still below the levels expected for their age, they have made good progress from their starting points.
- By the time pupils leave in Year 6, their attainment is low, especially in reading and writing. This means that the progress pupils make from Year 1, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is not consistently good, particularly across Key Stage 2. This is because of variability in the quality of teaching and learning.
- Pupils' current work and the school's own information together with the provisional test results for 2012 show that increasing numbers of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium are making better progress than previously. A notable success is the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4, which has increased from 30% to 73% in reading and from 30% to 55% in writing. This is because of the school's focus on one-to-one intervention and increased expectations by staff of the progress pupils should make.
- Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work. This is because of inconsistencies in how assessment information is used by staff to plan work that is sufficiently challenging and demanding. All too often in some classes, teachers under-estimate what pupils can achieve, which means that some of these pupils do not always achieve as well or progress as rapidly as they should.
- Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of Year 2 and low at the end of Year 6. School leaders are developing a strong culture for promoting reading; 'If you can read you can do anything.' is the motto. As a result pupils enjoy reading and talk about the stories they have read with enthusiasm. Younger pupils are developing their skills in reading unfamiliar words by using their knowledge of letters and sounds to word build and blend.
- Pupils in the resourced language units make good progress in overcoming their speech and language difficulties and achieve well from their starting points. This is because of good provision with individualised learning and support. Staff are skilled in developing pupils' language as they work alongside pupils. For example, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as pupils played a game of conkers to encourage their speaking and listening.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement because of its impact over time on pupils' low attainment and because the progress pupils make from their starting points is not consistently good at Key Stage 2. There is still some way to go to ensure that learning is good in every lesson.
- The proportion of good and outstanding lessons needs to increase further to overcome the legacy of underachievement and to make up for the gaps in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- The best lessons are characterised by:
 - effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes
 - challenging activities with ample scope for independent learning and discussion
 - introducing new skills that build well on pupils' prior learning
 - links with other subjects made clear

- strong support from teaching assistants, particularly for pupils that are new to school or who find learning difficult
- effective use of success criteria in developing pupils' understanding
- pupils being supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work with effective comments from teachers in their books, most noticeably in literacy.
- When the planning and teaching are at their best the impact on pupils' progress is significant. For example, pupils in Year 4 made good progress in their understanding of writing a five-part story by discussing and sharing their ideas with others. This lesson confirmed how well pupils can achieve when expectations are high and the teaching imaginative.
- Where teaching is less strong:
 - not enough is expected from pupils because teachers underestimate what pupils can do
 - activities are not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils because teachers' use of assessment information to plan activities is not consistently accurate. As one pupil commented, 'Sometimes our work is too easy.'
 - teachers control what pupils do too tightly, which limits their ability to make their own decisions and direct their own activities
 - there are insufficient opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to use their thinking skills and use and apply their knowledge
 - activities are not engaging enough to sustain pupils' interest for longer periods of time
 - in some classes pupils are not working at the correct level. As one child said, 'We've done this work before last year.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Typically, pupils' behaviour is good around school and at playtime. Pupils feel safe in school because the atmosphere is calm and well ordered. They have positive attitudes to their work and show respect and kindness to one another irrespective of age, race and disability. They enjoy all aspects of school life, which was obvious in discussions with them.
- The work of the learning mentor and the pastoral team has been pivotal in enhancing communication between home and school and helping parents and carers to gain qualifications. They have also worked effectively to improve pupils' attendance and in getting pupils in the right frame of mind ready to learn. This has involved the use of relaxation and reflective techniques, including peer massage, as well as a 'drop in' facility for pupils to chat about their worries. As a result, more pupils are attending regularly and arriving to school on time.
- Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of the learning mentor. They develop a strong social conscience and are eager to take on extra responsibilities, such as acting as playground buddies or becoming members of the active school council and eco committee.
- Instances of all kinds of bullying are uncommon and pupils are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and anxieties. As one child commented, 'If we have any problems, teachers sort it.'
- Younger pupils are friendly and confident in approaching adults and visitors to the school. They are very keen to find out who people are and engage in conversation. For example, one child in the 'role-play' café was more than happy to interact with the headteacher by charging £10 for a piece of toast!
- Staff have improved the way in which they manage pupils' behaviour following in-service training and a whole-school focus on anti-bullying. As a group they have clear expectations of how to tackle stereotyping and homophobia.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership is not good because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching require further improvement. In addition, because of several new appointments and staff absence, the structure of the leadership team is not yet complete and fully operational.
- The school has used its allocation of funds for the pupil premium wisely by investing in the role of the learning mentor. This appointment has had a significant impact on pupils' positive attitudes to school, their good behaviour and their improving attendance.
- Leaders have made some headway in placing pupils' learning at the heart of planning, improving the learning environment and in raising pupils' achievement. This is reflected in the latest test results for 2012, which are an improvement on 2010 and 2011.
- Senior leaders are focused on improving the life chances and in removing the barriers to learning for all pupils whatever their circumstances. For example, since the last inspection, focused work on improving pupils' mathematical skills is beginning to bear fruit, with increasing numbers of pupils making better progress in most year groups. This means that the school's promotion of equal opportunity and tackling discrimination is improving despite pupils not reaching their expected levels by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders and governors acknowledge that much remains to be done to raise pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and to accelerate their progress further, particularly in reading and writing.
- The leadership of teaching is beginning to improve and plans are in place to ensure that the performance management of staff is more rigorous with clear links to the new teaching standards.
- A more robust programme of monitoring the quality of teaching has been established. Senior leaders report back regularly to staff on the quality of lessons with feedback and guidance. Increasingly, this information is being used to inform the professional development of teachers. Further improvements, however, are required in how senior leaders make judgements on the achievement of pupils and groups of pupils within lessons.
- The curriculum is not yet good because the progress of learners in reading and writing in Key Stage 2 requires improvement and there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and thinking skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through a wide range of visits and visitors to school backed up by careful attention in the curriculum to pupils' personal, social and health education.
- The school improvement plan sets out the appropriate priorities to drive the school forward. However, the targets and criteria for measuring success over time within the plan are not as sharp as they could be to fully inform staff and governors about how effectively the school is improving.
- Considering the recent advances in pupils' achievement and because there is a trend of improvement in pupil outcomes, despite some remaining weaknesses, the school is adequately placed to improve further.
- There has been intensive support for the school from the local authority. The school improvement partner provides effective and accurate guidance to senior leaders in self-evaluation, data analysis and in strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - governors are committed to see the school improve and are keen to access further training to support their own development
 - increasingly, they are more aware of what goes on in school and their statutory responsibilities are met. Systems to keep pupils safe and free from harm are effective and revised regularly
 - there is still further work to be done to increase the confidence of the governing body to act as a critical friend to school and hold senior leaders to account.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105944
Local authority	Salford
Inspection number	400814

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Salmon
Headteacher	Hazel Brady
Date of previous school inspection	19 July 2010
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