

Holy Trinity CofE Dobcross Primary School

Delph New Road, Dobcross, Oldham, OL3 5BP

Inspection dates 17–18 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils' behaviour is consistently good at work and play. They are keen and enthusiastic learners and concentrate well.
- Parents and carers are highly positive about the care and support their children receive. Pupils in all classes are happy and well looked after. They feel safe.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress.
- Standards in reading and mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is typically good with some things that are outstanding, most noticeably in Years 5 and 6.
- In most lessons, busy pupils respond with enthusiasm to a range of practical and interesting activities.
- Pupils' have clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance for others because relationships are strong.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher keep a close eye on the school's performance. They know exactly where the school is strong or weak and use this information effectively to steer improvement.
- Senior leaders are relentless in the way they try to raise achievement and to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all lessons are good and outstanding because sometimes teachers' underestimate what pupils can achieve.
- Too often teachers tightly control what pupils do so pupils do not learn to work on their own or think enough about their learning.
- Pupils' progress in writing is not as strong as it is in reading because some of the tasks they are given do not really get them interested in writing, and they do not practise writing in enough different subjects.
- Pupils are not always told how to improve their work in writing and reach the next level.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and members of the governing body and met 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 observation with an inspector.
- The inspectors met some parents and carers informally at the start of the school day and took into account the response to the school’s own surveys. There were no responses from parents and carers to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View).

Inspection team

Steve Isherwood, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Christopher Ogden

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs and supported through school action is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British with a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not have any pupils in alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain the focus on improving teaching and learning so that it is always good and outstanding, by:
 - making sure that all lessons move on at a brisk pace, so that pupils are always fully challenged and engrossed in their learning
 - ensuring pupils learn to work on their own and develop useful ways of thinking about what they are learning.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing so that it matches that in reading and mathematics, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to be more creative and to write for a range of purposes in different subjects
 - providing effective guidance to diagnose more precisely what pupils need to do next to move on to the next level
 - ensuring that tasks capture pupils' interest and stimulate them to want to write.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and abilities broadly typical for their age. They get off to a good start, are well taught and settle quickly into school routines. By the time pupils leave in Year 6, the proportions of pupils attaining at the expected Level 4 and at the higher Level 5 are above average in English and mathematics. This means that the progress pupils make from their starting points, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is good.
- Pupils' progress in writing lags behind that in reading and mathematics. This is because teachers do not systematically plan exciting, creative and motivating opportunities for pupils to practise their skills across a range of different subjects. In addition, pupils are not always supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work and reach the next level by comments from teachers in their books.
- Pupils' current work, along with the test results for 2012, show that increasing numbers of pupils, including those supported by the pupil premium, are making better than expected progress from their starting points, most noticeably in reading and mathematics. This is down to improvements to teaching and increased knowledge by teachers of the progress pupils should make.
- Achievement in reading is consistently good because pupils' reading skills are built on systematically year-on-year. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above average. Pupils read widely and with expression. They talk enthusiastically about the authors and the contents of their books. Younger pupils are developing their skills well in reading unfamiliar words by using their knowledge of letters and sounds to build words.
- Though the way teachers mark pupils' writing is not yet consistently good, improvements introduced since the previous inspection have strengthened the quality of teachers' marking. Pupils in Years 2 and 6, for example, take notice of the comments teachers make and use the guidance well. As one child commented, 'the marking helps us to improve our work'.

The quality of teaching is good

- The majority of teaching is well planned and easily captures and sustains pupils' concentration. As a result, pupils are busy in lessons and respond with enthusiasm to a range of practical and interesting activities. Pupils particularly enjoy activities that fire their enthusiasm for learning and where they can share their ideas with others. For example, pupils in Year 6 commented, 'we like activities that get our brains going.'
- The best lessons are characterised by:
 - effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes
 - challenging activities with opportunities for pupils to make decisions about how they learn
 - strong support from teaching assistants, particularly for those pupils who find learning difficult
 - the introduction of new skills in a way that builds well on what pupils can already do
 - links with other subjects that are made clear.
- When the planning and teaching are at their best, pupils become absorbed in their learning with carefully crafted activities that encourage them to investigate, predict and direct their own learning. For example pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress in their understanding of the key differences between a biography and an autobiography by discussing their ideas with each other in small groups. This lesson confirmed how well the pupils can achieve when expectations are high and the teaching is imaginative.
- In the small number of lessons where teaching still requires improvement, not enough is expected from pupils because teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve and tasks lack pace and challenge. This means that some of the work is too easy. In addition, teachers control

what pupils do too tightly which limits their ability to work on their own and think deeply about what they are doing.

- Most teachers use resources, including the interactive whiteboard, well to promote pupils' understanding. However, in a small number of lessons there were missed opportunities for pupils to make frequent use of information and communication technology (ICT) to help with their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is typically good in lessons and around the school. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their positive attitudes and good attendance. They enjoy all aspects of school life, which was obvious in discussions with them.
- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong because high quality relationships are the hallmark of the school.
- Pupils feel safe and mature into well-rounded and thoughtful young people with clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance. Everyone gets along. As one pupil said, 'this is a loving school.'
- Pupils develop a strong social conscience and are keen to take on extra responsibilities such as looking after younger pupils, becoming a health and safety monitor or a member of the active eco-committee.
- Instances of all kinds of bullying are uncommon and pupils are confident that staff will listen to their concerns and anxieties. Pupils are quick to point out that staff treat them fairly. This is because teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively so that pupils are in no doubt about what is expected from them and how they should behave.
- The reason why pupils' behaviour and safety is not outstanding is down to the fact that pupils are not consistently provided with enough opportunities to take responsibility, make decisions and show independence in lessons, especially where teaching is less strong.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders show a real drive and determination to improve the school. The headteacher works with energy and commitment and is successfully steering the school in the right direction. She is well supported by an equally committed team of staff and governors who share her vision and sense of purpose. As a group they are working together effectively to provide for all pupils regardless of background or circumstances and ensure there is no discrimination.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher check the quality of teaching thoroughly. Their judgements on the effectiveness of lessons are accurate and correctly identify the strengths in teaching and where further improvements can be made. Teachers' performance is well managed. Difficult messages are given clearly. This means that weaknesses in the work of individuals are followed-up with training and support. The correct decisions are made about teachers' movement up the salary scale on the basis of their performance and the decisions reflect the new national teaching standards.
- The school has used its small allocation of pupil premium funding wisely by investing in extra-curricular activities and in providing one-to-one support for targeted pupils. This has included opportunities for pupils to go on a residential activity, access musical tuition and attend extra English lessons. These activities have had a significant impact on raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
- Senior leaders are clearly focused on improving the life chances and in removing the barriers to learning for all pupils whatever their circumstances. For example, focused work on improving pupils' mathematical skills is leading to more pupils making and exceeding the levels expected of them by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- The curriculum has strengths in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development through a wide range of visits and visitors to school. Activities are carefully chosen to broaden pupils' interests with additional opportunities. There is a high take-up of the extra-curricular clubs and activities. Pupils are provided with specialist teaching in Spanish, music and physical education. These experiences add considerable enjoyment to pupils' learning and are highly valued by all.

- Although the curriculum is suitably broad, it does not always challenge pupils to learn independently and develop useful ways of thinking. There are some weaker areas in the way work in writing is planned; tasks are not always exciting enough to make pupils really want to write, and opportunities are sometimes missed to get pupils to use their writing skills creatively in a range of different subjects.
- The local authority has until quite recently, taken a light touch approach to the school. However, it is now giving more practical support to the headteacher, staff and governors.
- Considering the advances in pupils' achievement over the last year and along with its other strengths, including the rigorous analysis of pupils' progress, the school is well placed to continue to improve.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Members of the governing body are committed to the school's improvement and are keen to access further training to support them in their role. As a group, they have a good understanding of the school's priorities and are confident to ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff.
- They are fully aware of what goes on in school and how well the school is performing because they understand the link between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. They know what is being done to improve teaching, and about teachers' pay.
- They ensure the school meets its statutory responsibilities and that all staff have been vetted and trained appropriately to keep pupils safe and free from harm.
- Governors are thoughtful and perceptive in making sure financial resources are used to deliver improving outcomes for pupils. For example, good decisions have been made about what the school spends the pupil premium on.

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	105691
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	395441

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Renold
Headteacher	Elizabeth Travis
Date of previous school inspection	22 November 2006
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