

St Hilda's Church of England Primary School

Whittaker Lane, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 1HA

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils are very happy and would recommend their school because 'everyone gets on so well and helps each other' and 'staff are always there to help us'.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress and reach the expected standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Teachers provide interesting lessons that capture and build on pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils are keen to learn, work well together and enjoy good relationships with staff. Reading is taught well and pupils are able to use their skills in all subjects.
- Pupils entitled to a free school meal progress well because pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support and activities.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils feel very safe in school and move between the two buildings with consideration for their own and each other's safety. Attendance is above average.
- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Her determination for ongoing improvement is shared by all staff. Meticulous checking of the school's performance has successfully raised achievement and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Good governance provides knowledgeable challenge and well informed support and has made a valuable contribution to school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is almost always good, not enough is outstanding.
- Attainment in writing is improving but remains weaker than in reading or mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in nine lessons, heard some pupils read, visited the breakfast club and scrutinised staff questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and with the representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at school documents and national data. Pupils' workbooks and their progress records were scrutinised.
- Procedures for gathering an accurate picture of the school's performance and assessing the quality of teaching and learning, and safeguarding arrangements were checked.
- There were not enough responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for results to be shown. The inspector spoke with a small number of parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average sized primary school and pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- There are more girls than boys and the number of pupils joining or leaving the school at different times is high.
- About two thirds of the pupils are of White British heritage; others are of Asian heritage, mainly Pakistani, and a few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 34% which is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Staffing changes since the previous inspection include the appointment of two assistant headteachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - sharing and extending the outstanding practice already found in the school
 - ensuring planned outdoor learning activities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage match the quality of the indoor learning activities.
- Raise standards and accelerate progress in writing throughout the school by:
 - broadening pupils' vocabulary so they can enrich and add interest to their work
 - implementing a consistent style of handwriting
 - enhancing pupils' ability to spell common words accurately and use punctuation effectively in their work
 - displaying examples of good quality writing to inspire pupils to do even better.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- In this small school there are often fewer than ten pupils in a year group and the number with special educational needs varies. Year groups change considerably over time as pupils join or leave the school. Consequently, outcomes can fluctuate from year to year. Through careful monitoring and providing extra support, leaders have ensured that any small differences in attainment are rapidly and securely narrowing.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those typical for their age, especially in language and mathematics. Good teaching and the stimulating curriculum ensure they feel safe and are keen to learn. Children were enthralled when a dinosaur egg mysteriously appeared in the classroom; staff use opportunities like this skilfully to develop the children's language skills. They progress well but enter Year 1 below the levels expected.
- There has been a sustained rise in attainment over time. Pupils progress well as they move through the school and attainment at the end of Year 6 matches national expectations in English and mathematics. Outcomes were particularly strong in 2012 when every pupil attained the nationally expected standards in their tests in both reading and writing, and half did better than this in mathematics.
- School tracking shows that pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to reach their challenging targets. However, tracking also shows that writing lags behind reading and mathematics. Pupils do not always enrich their writing with exciting words or use punctuation effectively. Their spelling is often careless and variable styles of handwriting detract from the quality of their work.
- Careful use of pupil premium funding, such as learning in small groups, provides additional support for pupils entitled to a free school meal so they progress at the same rate as their classmates. As a result, although their standards of attainment remain below that of their peers in school, the gap between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally is closing.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those learning to speak English receive well organised provision. This is closely matched to their individual needs so they progress well in relation to their starting points and capabilities.
- The teaching of reading is well organised and methods are applied consistently. Younger pupils enjoy letters and sounds activities every morning in small groups closely matched to their different abilities. Older pupils read widely and enjoy both fiction and non-fiction; they know their favourite authors and many say they use the local library. Pupils gain the reading skills they need in all subjects and are well equipped for their future learning.

The quality of teaching is good

- When asked which lessons they like best, pupils replied, 'Everything!' and said their work is 'actually quite good fun'. Keen attitudes mean they tackle tasks eagerly and make good progress in learning.
- Inspection evidence and school monitoring records show that, since the previous inspection, rigorous action by school leaders has raised the quality of teaching to good, with some that is outstanding, resulting in good achievement. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, planned learning activities for the outdoor areas often lack focus and require improvement to match the good quality provided in the classroom.
- Typically, lessons feature varied activities, move along briskly and keep pupils busily learning. Classrooms are well organised, with prompts to help with English and mathematics. There are attractive displays of pupils' work, although there are few examples of good-quality writing to inspire pupils to improve their spelling, punctuation and handwriting and to use more exciting

words.

- Outstanding teaching was observed in a fast-paced session when the oldest pupils were challenged to work in pairs to create different types of sentences. This stimulated thinking skills, made learning very enjoyable and promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well. Pupils moved around the room, sharing ideas, working co-operatively and thanking each other politely for helping. High-quality teaching was also seen when Year 2 pupils worked independently in groups of four, finding words to describe an imaginary island.
- Staff make good use of the assessment and tracking system that provides easily accessible pupil progress information, enabling them to match tasks closely to pupils' ability and their individual needs.
- The way pupils' work is marked is a strong feature of good teaching. Pupils' workbooks show that marking is thorough and the school system is applied consistently. Pupils say they get useful feedback about how to improve, and are very clear about their learning targets.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Outstanding behaviour makes the school a happy place for everyone and contributes to pupils' good progress. Staff apply the behaviour management system consistently and school records show that outstanding behaviour is now typical. Pupils know and understand the need for school rules and think they are fair. Exclusions are extremely rare.
- Pupils are always polite, friendly and eager to help. They show respect, care and consideration for each other and staff, and cooperate willingly when working in the 'round robins' groups in class and when working with different staff.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school and move indoors and between the two buildings with consideration for their own and others' safety.
- They know how to keep themselves safe, for example on the busy local roads, and are adamant that they can turn to any member of staff if they have a problem. Pupils agreed that there is no bullying. They found the Anti-Bullying week useful, are well aware bullying may take different forms such as physical or verbal abuse and know what to do if this should happen to them.
- The breakfast club offers those pupils who attend healthy food and enjoyable activities and assists working parents by providing a secure environment for their children.
- Robust efforts have successfully raised attendance levels to above average and have reduced cases of persistent absence. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time each day, keen to get into class and start learning.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders' determination to continue to drive the school forward is fully supported by all staff. Improvement plans clearly show accurate understanding of the school's strengths and what needs further improvement. There is a strong sense of teamwork, united in the aim of ensuring all pupils have equality of opportunity.
- Since the previous inspection carefully planned and directed training has helped staff improve and broaden their professional skills. Leaders continually check the quality of teaching and teachers know they are accountable for their pupils' progress. These actions have raised the quality of teaching to good, with some that is outstanding, which has had a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. However, there is more to be done to share outstanding practice more widely and improve the teaching of writing to boost standards to match those in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils say they 'learn lots of new things'. The curriculum is carefully planned to provide the

skills all pupils need for further learning and to meet the needs of those with special educational needs and those in receipt of pupil premium funding. The 'Skills School' in mathematics and the 'Linked Learning' topics capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm so they want to learn more, as shown by the rising trend in attainment.

- Literacy and mathematical skills are used and developed in other subjects, for example writing a prayer at harvest time or creating a bar chart to record the moon's gravitational pull on the Earth.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is successfully promoted, as seen in pupils' outstanding behaviour, friendliness and caring attitudes. Learning French, playing musical instruments and performing with the choir, visits out of school and the residential experience for Key Stage 2 pupils enrich and extend what is studied in class.
- Parents are welcomed and several said they are happy to approach staff for help and advice about supporting learning at home. Four parents' evenings are held each year; regular newsletters and the weekly 'diary dates' leaflet ensure they are well informed about progress and events.
- The local authority provides good support for the school, for example by helping set up the new system for tracking pupils' progress and providing access to additional resources.
- Arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. The school is well maintained; child protection and first aid training is up to date.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed. They hold school leaders to account by asking searching questions and challenge rigorously using assessment data to compare the school's performance with that of others. Governors ensure the outcomes of staff performance reviews are used to improve teaching and develop the skills of leaders at all levels in order to tackle any underperformance. Finances are managed carefully and governors check how effectively pupil premium funding is used to overcome any barriers to learning. Consequently, they have a very good grasp of the strengths of the school and what is needed to ensure further improvement.

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	105351
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	404986

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	111
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Armitage
Headteacher	Adele Gaunt
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
Telephone number	0161 798 6227
Fax number	0161 773 5320
Email address	sthildas@bury.gov.uk

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