



St James CofE Primary School, Farnworth

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105208
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 277317
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hillside Avenue
School category	Voluntary controlled		Farnworth
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Bolton, Lancashire BL4 9QB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 572587
Number on roll	300	Fax number	01204 697082
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Reverend Hartley
Date of previous inspection	11 September 2000	Headteacher	Miss Paula-Jane Green

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	277317

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

St James' is a large voluntary controlled Church of England school in Farnworth, Bolton. Most of the pupils are white British, with few from a minority ethnic background, although 10 of these are at an early stage of learning English. A well above average proportion of pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. When pupils start school their skills and knowledge are very low. A well above average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. More pupils than usual leave or join the school between Reception and Year 6, including traveller and looked after children.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St James' is one of the most improved schools in Bolton and is outstanding. It is an oasis of calm within a turbulent estate, where pupils are safe, secure, happy and make excellent progress, because the school caters for their learning and emotional needs extremely well.

Pupils really enjoy coming to school and feel very safe there. Their behaviour is outstanding and their confidence and self-esteem increase in the school's supportive and caring atmosphere.

Relationships between all adults and pupils are exemplary and pupils learn well because the work they are set is pitched at the right level for them to succeed. The curriculum is good, and pupils' personal development is outstanding. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good. In the Nursery, children have easy access to an 'outdoor classroom', which is spacious and safe. However, children in Reception do not have their own designated outdoor learning area and this restricts the opportunities they have to take part in learning and social activities outdoors. Care, guidance and support are outstanding.

The school provides excellent value for money because it is led and managed exceptionally well. The well-being and achievement of pupils is at the core of all school improvement plans. The school knows itself well, but is too modest about its achievements and effectiveness. Improvement since the last inspection is very good, and this is shown most clearly in much improved standards, excellent behaviour and the school's total commitment to including all pupils in everything the school has to offer. The school is well placed to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a secure designated outdoor learning area for children in Reception so that they have a wider range of opportunities to improve their skills outdoors.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with very low basic skills, some having minimal spoken language. Between here and Year 6, where broadly average standards are now being attained, they make outstanding progress. Teachers' assessments and school data show that the improvement in results is likely to be maintained.

This progress is due to a mix of sustained very good, and outstanding teaching and the

setting of challenging but achievable targets which parents and pupils understand. The

headteacher and staff are really successful at raising pupils' belief in their capabilities; a

Year 6 boy saying, 'Any pupil can do anything if they put their mind to it'. This positive attitude towards learning runs throughout the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those at an early stage of learning English and other minority groups are enthused with the same will to learn. Helped by

additional, practical support from learning assistants and mentors, many of these pupils

make exceptional progress and outstrip the targets set for them. No groups of pupils underachieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school successfully promotes pupils' personal development and as a result, they respond extremely well to all adults' high expectations and their learning is enriched. Pupils become confident, eager learners and take pride in their work and their school. Behaviour is outstanding: pupils understand the impact that behaviour has on their progress and their enjoyment of school. Relationships are harmonious. Pupils feel safe from bullying or racism and have the confidence that the school will deal with any incidents well. Through the school council, and opportunities to take on responsibilities, pupils are developing their basic skills and personal qualities for their future economic well-being.

The school teaches pupils how to live a healthy lifestyle well and they are beginning to understand how healthy food and exercise will help them to concentrate and improve their learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness has a high priority. They grow into generous well-rounded and thoughtful individuals with a distinct sense of worth. The good links with the church, opportunities to visit museums and other places of interest enhance pupils' learning and their lives. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and as a result, attendance has improved and is now at the national average and the number of parents who do not regularly ensure their children's attendance is decreasing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding and as a result pupils learn really well. Teachers' marking is consistently helpful and points out to pupils how they can improve further. The use of stickers and rewards also motivates pupils very well, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Lessons are well planned to meet the full range of pupils' needs, using up-to-date assessment information. The outstanding relationships evident in classrooms result in pupils being confident to answer questions and share their opinions. Teachers value what pupils say and this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning. The 'brain gym' sessions at the start of some lessons set the tone for learning. As one child was heard to say, 'These brain gym sessions help us to get all the different parts of our brains working together.'

Lessons are conducted at a fast pace and challenge all pupils resulting in them making very good progress. For example, in a mathematics lesson for below average Year 6 pupils, the combination of well planned, learning activities which involved the teacher and pupils in constant conversation resulted in pupils having an above average understanding of the decimal system for their capabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is effectively planned to meet the needs of all pupils in the school and ensures that all pupils are fully included in all areas of learning. The school has quite rightly identified the need for a strong emphasis on English and mathematics and this focus has driven up standards in these subjects. The curriculum has been remodelled to make it more creative and to include more art and music. Pupils are very proud to perform in public and rise to the occasion with aplomb. Events such as these have a positive effect on pupils' interests, learning and self-esteem. A weakness is the lack of provision for outdoor learning for the Reception classes. These children do not have the same opportunities as those in the Nursery classes to learn outdoors.

The curriculum is enriched well by a wide range of other activities including visits and visitors into school. The 'Music Live' sessions seen during the inspection stimulated pupils' interest very well. The range of sporting activities helps to extend and develop pupils' skills, promotes their health and adds to their enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care of pupils is outstanding. The school provides an emotionally safe and secure environment and lives up to its philosophy that 'Our children belong to all of us'. All members of staff know pupils very well and academic and social development is thoroughly monitored and sensitively supported. They track not only teachers' assessments of how well individuals are doing, but also which 'catch up' programmes they are on, their attendance and other factors which may have an impact on their progress. Learning mentors and support assistants provide a key role in the very good support for pupils who have difficulty adjusting to school life. Child protection procedures are robust and pupils who are at risk are quickly identified and supported. The school works very successfully with a wide-ranging array of outside agencies to help these pupils. Pupils say that they feel safe in the school. Parents confirm that the arrangements for children to settle into school and for the transfer of Year 6 pupils to their next schools are very good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher leads with verve and a relentless clear vision, and has infected staff with her enthusiasm and long-term drive for improvement. She has the overwhelming support of parents, who recognise how well their children are doing in school and why. An exceptional element of her work is the focus on pupils' personal development and the effect this has on pupils' belief in their own capacity to succeed, their willingness to

rise to the challenges they are set, and the good progress they make.

Senior leaders work very well in teams with all staff, enabling middle managers to lead improvements such as making links between subjects. The systems for monitoring teaching and learning are very detailed and evaluative. The results of these and external evaluations provide the school with challenging targets for future improvement.

The work of the governors is very good. Their appointment of the headteacher was inspired; they take an active role in school self-evaluation and are very supportive of the

successful initiatives, which have lifted the school's results so effectively. Current school

improvement planning is focused very clearly on raising standards further and in trialling

new initiatives to fulfil this aim. Improvement since the last inspection is very good and

the school is well placed to improve even further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Please make sure you explain what this letter says to all the children in school and thank them for being so helpful to us during our visit.

These are the things we liked the most:

- we are really impressed with how quickly you learn and how much your work improves
- we think your behaviour is brilliant
- we think that your attitudes to school, your work and each other are splendid
- you have some really good teachers
- we think your headteacher is very special
- your smiles, which show us how happy you are in school
- all the adults look after you very well.

We have asked your school to do this now:

- we would like the children in reception to have their own outside area as we think it would be better for them.