



St Philip's CofE Primary School, Atherton

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106515
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277580
Inspection dates 6 July 2006 to 6 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs Judith Clarke CfBT Lead Inspector

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bolton Old Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Atherton
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M46 9FD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 883919
Number on roll	245	Fax number	01942 876145
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr A Glennon
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2000	Headteacher	Mrs G Burrow

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 6 July 2006 - 6 July 2006	Inspection number 277580
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Introduction

One Additional Inspector carried out the inspection. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, parents and governors. Lessons were visited and a range of documentation provided by the school was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation documentation and performance data. Discussions with the chair of governors and the receipt of 158 questionnaires from parents further assisted the writing of this report.

Description of the school

The school is an averaged sized school with pupils coming from a variety of social and economic backgrounds. Almost all children are from a white British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average, whilst the percentage of those with statements of special educational need is below average. The children's skills on entry to the school are broadly at the levels expected, although the profiles of each year group can be very different. The school has achieved a number of awards including Investors in People, Basic Skills Award and Eco School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Philip's C of E Primary is an outstanding school. It is highly regarded in the locality because of its strong church and community links and consequently it is oversubscribed. The pupils who are tremendously proud of their school say 'we enjoy school and learning is fun', whilst typical of parents' comments is that this is 'a happy school, where parents feel the teachers are prepared to go that extra mile.' The school motto 'Together we achieve' underpins the strong commitment and high priority given by this first-rate school to the development of self-confidence, self-esteem and learning.

When the children start school in the Reception class they come from a range of different pre-school settings and experiences. The children quickly learn to work and play together. This is because of the priority the school places on enabling the children to feel safe and secure. Parents are valued as partners in their children's learning. Sessions for the children before they start school help them to settle extremely well.

Key to the school's success are the team work and exceptional levels of care, support and guidance provided by all adults in the school. Consequently, although the children start school in the Reception class with attainment that is broadly at the levels expected, by the time they leave school in Year 6 they have made outstanding progress and reach standards that are exceptionally high in English, mathematics and science, with significant numbers of pupils achieving at the higher than expected levels.

Throughout the school there is a drive for improvement. The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher and the senior management team, is focused on helping the pupils succeed and reach their full potential. Second best is never good enough and there is a total commitment to ensuring that every child is given every opportunity to succeed. Self-evaluation is strong and purposeful and drives the school forwards. The inspection judged some aspects of the school's work better than the school did; this is because it was overly modest and cautious in some respects. Exceptional progress has been made since the last inspection. For example, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has greatly improved. However, the school is not complacent as is shown in its plans to trial new resources to improve the provision even further.

Extremely thorough checks are made on pupils' progress; this enables the school to target extra help and support for the pupils strategically. The strong team ethos enables new members of staff to become quickly part of a dynamic team. This means that no time is wasted and consistent and highly effective teaching is maintained.

The pupils say their lessons are interesting and they do lots of fun things. One pupil commented he liked physical education because 'he had fun, but got fit as well.' The quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding because lessons are purposeful and inspire the pupils to have a thirst for learning. Consistent, high quality teaching with careful attention to the needs of the individual underpins the work in all classes. In Reception, skilful teaching in targeted groups and the use of the newly refurbished outdoor area lend excitement to the children's learning so that they channel their enthusiasm and natural inquisitiveness to learn new things. A significant aid to learning

is the support and help given to the pupils by the talented teaching assistants who help the pupils with their work. They can often be seen guiding an individual or with a group discussing how to solve a particular problem.

The pupils work hard. They waste no time and set to their tasks with enthusiasm. Around the school at playtimes and lunchtimes, they play happily together. The school council is active and shows a commitment not only to the school but also to the wider community. The Year 6 pupils act as buddies for the Year 3 pupils, and the younger pupils talked about the help the older pupils gave them. A significant strength is in the way the pupils talk about and evaluate their work. They ask themselves honest questions and record on a traffic light system how they have got on. This means that the pupils are fully involved in their own learning and demonstrate an outstanding commitment to improvement.

The excellent curriculum is both experiential and creative and this allows the pupils to develop a wide range of academic and social skills. A headteacher of one of the local high schools reported: 'the pupils are very well prepared in all respects to start their career at the high school.' The pupils have outstanding opportunities to learn about the talents of others from a wide range of visits and visitors to the school, enabling the pupils to become engrossed in their learning. The pupils particularly enjoy the 'themed weeks' reporting that in the recent 'Industry week' they had enjoyed sampling their own 'Bobby Dazzler icecream.' Learning: informative, exciting and fun!

The governing body are committed to 'sustaining success' and appreciate the dedication and hard work that this involves. However, governors recognise that in success there is always room for improvement and are committed to help the school become even better. The 'Visioning group' made up from members of the community and parents is looking at fresh, innovative ideas to further extend and develop the scope of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding throughout the school. When the children start in the Foundation Stage their skills are broadly average. By the end of Year 2 the pupils reach standards that are above average, with all the pupils reaching the expected levels in mathematics and science. The unvalidated test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2006 show their achievement is excellent and standards in English, mathematics and science are all exceptionally high. Particularly pleasing for the school are the improved results in English, with the exceptional strength in science being maintained. The school recognises that the composition of each year group varies year on year: challenging targets are set for each year group and each child within that year group. Consequently progress and achievement for all the pupils is carefully watched and targeted so that all make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' attitudes to their learning are exceptional. They have a genuine desire to learn and to do well. Relationships are of a high order and so the pupils feel valued and supported. Consequently they work very hard and do exceptionally well, demonstrating high levels of self-esteem. One child in talking about her enjoyment of lessons said, 'You see my head is full of stories.' Attendance rates are very high, a clear indication of the enjoyment pupils find in school and also that parents recognise the value of taking holidays out of term time.

The pupils have many opportunities to shine, through the school's commitment to the church and the immediate and wider community. Many good causes are supported and pupils decide democratically how to allocate the funds they have raised. Particularly noteworthy is the work throughout the school to promote the pupils' economic well-being through a wide range of ongoing enterprise projects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is outstanding. It is especially effective at the end of Key Stage 2 and allows the pupils to make the maximum gains in their learning. Sharp planning ensures that all pupils are challenged appropriately and supported where necessary so that maximum gains in learning are made. Key is the consistency of teaching which means that progress is assured, building securely on previous learning. The pupils say that they always have positive feedback on their learning from the teachers and teaching assistants. Coupled with an increasing awareness and evaluation of their own work, this allows the pupils to accept responsibility for their own learning so that they strive to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum takes an outstanding account of the pupils' needs, so that their interests as well as their personal and emotional needs are exceptionally well catered for. The school's music tradition is strong with the brass band playing at social events. The exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular opportunities caters for many diverse interests and is open to all. Older pupils guide younger pupils at lunchtimes helping them to improve their games skills. This helps develop a healthy lifestyle and demonstrates the pupils' commitment to fitness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents recognise that the school keeps them very well informed about the curriculum and their child's progress so that they are able to support learning at home. Exceptional steps are taken to involve parents in the life and work of the school. Appropriate systems for risk assessments and child protection are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

There is a very strong enthusiastic leadership team, led by an outstanding headteacher who has a clear vision and determination to strive for the very best. A strong learning culture has been developed and embedded. Self-evaluation is accurate and analytical, noting where improvements are to be made and ensuring their improvement. This is clearly demonstrated in improved performance in writing and the input into mental mathematics, and is also apparent in the determination to be in the forefront of initiatives in ICT. The governing body have a clear view of the strengths and areas for development of the school, and see that maintaining successes is challenging.

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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?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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	1	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	1	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	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?	1	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	1	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

As you know, I recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to me. I really enjoyed talking to you about your work, visiting your classes, looking at your books and speaking to your teachers and parents. I think your school is an outstanding school. This gives you top marks. Well done.

What I like most about your outstanding school.

- Your friendly welcome. It was a pleasure to visit your school and talk to you all about your work.
- You behave very well both in class and in the playgrounds.
- In lessons you always do your best and check your work at the end to see if you could have done better, or if you need more practice.
- All the staff work very hard to make your learning fun.
- Your headteacher runs your school in an outstanding way. She cares about each and every one of you, listens to what you have to say and works hard to make school even better.
- Your parents and carers are right in thinking you go to an excellent school.

I know that you enjoy the work you do in information and communication technology and the school has exciting plans to try out some new equipment. I agree this is a good step forward in the use of technology. Perhaps it is a development that you can help with, by telling your teachers what you think. I hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that St Philip's keeps getting top marks.