



St Chad's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105690
Local Authority Oldham
Inspection number 287298
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Margaret Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Rhodes Avenue
School category	Voluntary controlled		Uppermill, Oldham
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire OL3 6EE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01457 875151
Number on roll (school)	235	Fax number	01457 871916
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Angela Gray
		Headteacher	Mr P Burnley
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Chad's is an average sized school set in the rural district of Saddleworth. The area is socially and economically advantaged. The number of pupils claiming free school meals is low. Almost all pupils come from a White British background and a few are of mixed or Asian backgrounds. A tiny number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A few pupils have a statement of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides excellent value for money. Inspectors largely agree with the school's own view of itself. St Chad's gives children an excellent education in a vibrant, stimulating and creative environment. Pupils are very happy, thoroughly enjoy school life and thrive, so that their achievement is excellent and they reach high standards. The school is exceptionally well led and managed by an inspirational headteacher who is extremely well supported by all staff. As a result the school has improved even further since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. It has dealt very effectively with the issues identified at that time. Governors are very effective and support the school by working closely together for the benefit of children and their parents. Parents are extremely pleased with what the school provides. The school knows its many strengths and exactly what it needs to develop next: staff have the enthusiasm and the skills to continue to be successful. The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding and consequently pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science is excellent. An extremely innovative and rich curriculum ensures that all pupils, whatever their abilities, develop as confident and competent individuals. All staff set great store by developing children as independent learners and pastoral care is exceptionally good. As a result pupils' personal development is outstanding: their behaviour is exemplary and they have excellent attitudes to learning. The children in the Foundation Stage are given a flying start because of the high quality provision made for them. Pupils continue to make rapid progress in Key Stage 1 and excellent progress as they move through Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school they are very well equipped to make the most of their future education.

What the school should do to improve further

The school has clearly identified and prioritised the areas for improvement in its development plan.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievements and standards are outstanding. When they start, the majority of children have skills that are above average in their personal and social development but skills are average in other areas expected for their age, with weaknesses in mathematical development. Overall children make rapid progress by the end of the Reception year and most reach and some exceed the standards expected for their age. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build very effectively on this good start and by the end of Year 2 they are confident and articulate speakers with well developed skills in reading and writing and mathematics. In 2005 around half attained the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics. Pupils continue to do extremely well in Key Stage 2. The school has consistently sustained high standards in results over the past five years except in 2005 when results dropped slightly due to the ability level of this group of pupils and some

disruption in staffing. School data shows that, as a result of very well targeted intervention, results fully recovered in 2006 to be well above average. Pupils in the current Year 6 are reaching high standards in English, mathematics and science with a significant proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels. They also do particularly well in all other subjects and in particular, in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress and reach levels similar to others because of the high quality of teaching and support they receive. The school exceeded its challenging targets in 2006 and is on course to meet even higher targets this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Links with a largely Muslim school in Oldham and a school in Namibia make a significant impact on pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths. Pupils really enjoy school, which is reflected in their above average levels of attendance. They come to school early and are eager to start the day. They have very good relationships with their teachers saying, 'Teachers are friendly and treat us nicely.' This results in excellent attitudes to learning, a keenness to participate in lessons and exemplary behaviour. Pupils work together very well on shared tasks, taking on responsibilities sensibly. The school council takes its responsibilities seriously by seeking the views of others, discussing ideas and as a result they gain pleasure from the changes they have made. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are confident that there is someone they could turn to if they needed help. In their eyes bullying is never an issue. They have an extremely good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and run a successful healthy snack shop at break time. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community, for instance through many fundraising activities. Their excellent basic skills and interpersonal skills prepare them well for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Teachers prepare lessons very carefully and plan work that is very well matched to pupils needs. Particularly clear learning objectives are set, along with criteria to judge success and are revisited at the end of lessons. This, along with the individual targets set, means that pupils are very aware of what they are learning and what is expected of them. Pupils particularly enjoy practical activities and apply 'thinking strategies' very well to help their progress. They find the activities in these lessons fun. Questioning and interactive whiteboards are used very effectively by teachers and support staff to promote and engage pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work rate. They push them

to the limit of their thinking and used short, timed activities very well. Pupils rise to these challenges and as a result are motivated, confident and achieve very well indeed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive very good support and high flyers extend their learning effectively. Teachers make excellent use of assessment information to ensure that all pupils work to their full capabilities. Very thorough and helpful marking informs pupils of what they have done well and how they can improve their work, so pupils are quick to achieve their targets and move on. As a result pupils show zeal for knowledge, are careful listeners and studious in their work. Handwriting and presentation of work is of exceptionally high quality.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is particularly rich, exciting and relevant. Pupils say, 'Everyday we learn something new and we like the practical activities.' The curriculum has been adapted to meet the needs of pupils extremely well. The introduction of 'Philosophy for Children' for example, is proving successful in developing pupils' thinking skills, which is boosting their overall confidence. The basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are promoted extremely well for all pupils. The school has introduced a range of activities which are having a significant impact on helping pupils become independent learners. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a range of visits and visitors, with a residential visit in Year 6 being a highlight for the pupils. There is excellent provision for pupils' personal, social and health education and citizenship, which ensures pupils are fully aware of health matters, including the dangers of smoking and substance abuse. The school provides a first rate range of clubs and activities to suit a wide range of interests. These activities contribute well to pupils' healthy lifestyles, enable them to develop new skills and reinforce their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

A very high priority is given to this aspect of the school's work. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. One parent's comment summed up the views of many when she said, 'This is an excellent school. We are delighted with the way our children have flourished in a supportive, caring environment.' The warm and caring atmosphere within the school ensures that pupils feel safe and secure. The trust pupils have in teachers and assistants is exceptional. Child protection procedures are fully up to date and all staff are fully trained. Procedures to vet staff working in the school are robust. The individual progress of pupils is rigorously tracked and very good use is made of information on pupils' performance in tests and lessons to target extra support where needed. Pupils are fully aware of their targets and feel that they are helped to achieve them through reflecting on their work and teachers' marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. This has resulted in a collegiate approach across the school, which has created exceptionally good conditions for teaching and learning: teachers feel well supported and enabled to carry out their work and pupils thrive and achieve. The headteacher is particularly skilled at developing links with parents, other schools and external agencies. These links provide valuable support for pupils and enrich their learning. The school's self evaluation gives a largely accurate picture of its many strengths, although it was conservative in a few of the judgements made about its performance. It takes full account of the views of pupils, parents, governors, the nearby secondary school and the local authority in identifying areas for improvement.

Governance is extremely strong. Governors' knowledge of the school and their commitment to it are excellent. They work very effectively with the senior management team to improve the overall quality of education provided. As a result the school has an excellent capacity to improve. Professional development is a strong feature: all staff, including administrative staff and support assistants, take a significant part in training. This is linked very well to the improvement plan. Priorities for improvement are accurate and it is clear that the school is constantly striving to do better. Very effective action is taken to address any weaknesses. The success of improvements in ICT and in developing pupils' independent learning, since the previous inspection, provides evidence of this.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school last week. It was wonderful to see what a happy time you have there. Mr Lord and I really enjoyed talking with you, finding out about the things that you like doing and seeing your work. I am delighted to tell you that your school is outstanding. This is our top grade.

You really enjoy your school because there are so many exciting things to do and learn. Your mums, dads and carers think that your school is an excellent place to be and we agree with them. You arrive at school on time and hardly ever miss a day. You are growing up to be confident and well behaved and know how to be safe and healthy. You are kind to each other and have lots of friends.

The adults teach you extremely well and take exceptionally good care of you. You are learning new things all the time. They know exactly what each of you needs to learn and you know too. You work very hard and do your very best so that your standards are very high by the time you leave the school. Most of you have very neat and tidy work and are proud of it.

Your headteacher and the other people in charge of the school run it exceptionally well. They know exactly what they need to do to make sure it stays such a brilliant place to be.

We hope that you carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers by keeping up the good work you are doing especially in your 'Big Writing' and mathematics so that St Chad's stays such an excellent school.