



Holy Trinity CofE Dobcross Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105691
Local Authority Oldham
Inspection number 287299
Inspection dates 22–23 November 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Delph New Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Dobcross, Saddleworth
Age range of pupils	3–11		West Yorkshire OL3 5BP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01457 872860
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	01457 819824
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr E Kirkbride
		Headteacher	Mrs E Rooke
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school serves a semi-rural area of mainly private housing. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low, and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Eco Schools awards.

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. Pupils reach consistently high standards and make excellent progress. The school's exceptional performance in all aspects of its work means that it provides excellent value for money, and has outstanding capacity for future improvement. It has made good improvement since the last inspection. The school's mission statement emphasises the importance of everyone working together 'to achieve education of the highest possible quality, in order to prepare pupils to meet the challenges of their future'. This aim is impressively met. High standards of literacy and numeracy contribute very strongly to pupils' future economic well-being. The school's success is underpinned by pupils' extremely good behaviour, and the quality of the relationships within the school community. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as shown by their very good attendance, their enthusiasm for the varied out-of-school activities, and above all, by the interest and pleasure they take in their lessons. The school enjoys the overwhelming support of its parents and carers who value the individual attention their children receive. Parents say, 'My very different children have all been encouraged and have blossomed in all areas.' Pupils feel safe and happy, and they genuinely care for each other. The buddy initiative fosters close relationships between the youngest and oldest pupils, and this increases the strong sense of common purpose within school. There are strong links with the local community that encourage pupils to be charitable and enterprising. They are extremely conscious of the importance of leading healthy lifestyles and the school has very well developed programmes of healthy eating and physical education.

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent and is a major factor in pupils' outstanding achievement. There is no room for complacency, and the school continually seeks to raise standards. Good examples are the recent successful drives to improve writing across the school and to motivate boys to read. There is outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage. The youngest pupils enjoy stimulating teaching and a wide range of exciting experiences within a caring and sensitive environment. As a result, they make very good progress, and this is the springboard for their future success. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make excellent progress thanks to the expert help and support they receive from staff. The school rigorously tracks the progress of its pupils against challenging targets, and assessment systems are well developed. Marking of pupils' work is carried out extremely conscientiously, but teachers' comments do not always provide pupils with enough advice about how to make greater improvement.

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher is an excellent role model, and she and her skilled staff work tirelessly to raise standards and to promote the school's mission statement. The school is innovative and ambitious in its work, which is greatly enhanced by the contribution of the imaginative and resourceful governing body. The school's self-evaluation of its work underestimates its performance in all aspects other than pupils' personal development and well-being. This is the result of modesty on the school's part rather than misjudgement. The school knows itself well, and has a clear and exciting vision of its future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fine-tune the marking of pupils' work so that they have an even greater understanding of what they need to do to make further improvements.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children enter the school with skills that are above those expected for their age. They consistently make very good progress throughout each stage of their education in the school to reach standards of attainment by age 11 in English, mathematics and science that are well above national averages. This is the result of the excellent teaching they receive. The school has excellent links with other agencies so that all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make the same level of progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This aspect of the school's work, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. The school's mission statement is at the heart of its work, and every pupil is valued and nurtured. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in developing personal and social skills. Parents strongly support this view, pointing out how keen their children are to get back to school after illness or injury. These positive attitudes are also shown through the willingness of many pupils to come to school early to fulfil their responsibilities. Attendance is good, and consistently above the national average. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and know how to keep safe, encouraged by the school's participation in local and national activities. They have a say in how to improve the school, for example, through the work of the eco-council; and their views are sought in other ways. This leads pupils towards a very good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They make an outstanding contribution to village life and are involved in the wider community through, for example, their invaluable links with a primary school in another area of the local authority. They learn important skills that will help them in the future, for example, working in groups and raising and managing funds. These, coupled with their outstanding achievement, mean that pupils are very well equipped for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding throughout the school, leading to excellent standards and achievement. All lessons are rigorously planned and there is a very good match of work to what pupils already know, so they build very effectively on their

earlier learning. Outstanding relationships between teachers and pupils and interesting lessons help to ensure that pupils behave extremely well, have productive attitudes to their work, and are very keen to share their ideas. This enhances their learning. Pupils are urged to do their best, but there is also a strong sense of fun and enjoyment in lessons that keep all pupils motivated. Pupils are encouraged to take initiative and develop their thinking skills from an early age. Teachers very effectively build on these skills so that the pupils are able to work and learn independently. For example, pupils learn how to judge the quality of others' work, so that they can more critically examine their own.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils have very good proficiency in basic skills. It also succeeds in enriching their learning through an innovative approach to the curriculum. The personal, social, health education and citizenship curriculum is its core, and underpins the consistently very high standards and achievement of the pupils. The quality of the school's partnerships, for example, through the Learning Network of local schools, has provided many additional opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning. The school is flexible and creative in the way it adapts the curriculum to meet its pupils needs and interests, for example in its use of science fiction to successfully stimulate boys' interests in reading, and its increased time for art, music and physical education following requests from pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school offers an outstanding level of care, guidance and support to all pupils. This is another key factor in their very high levels of achievement and personal development. The school's detailed programme for personal, social and health education helps pupils to stay safe and keep physically, socially and emotionally healthy. This is supported by other useful initiatives such as the school's work towards the Healthy and Eco-schools awards. Teachers offer a very good level of support for pupils' academic development based on a detailed knowledge of how well they are doing, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers' marking, and the guidance that it offers to help pupils to improve, is good. Usually, it offers due praise, and points out what has been done well. At its best, the marking offers clear points to pupils about how they can make their work even better. Sometimes, however, this advice is not clear enough about how to bring about the desired improvements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership and management in the school is outstanding. The dedicated headteacher has excellent vision, leads by example, and is well supported by her staff.

The school constantly seeks to improve its performance, and is continually looking to forge new partnerships with organisations and individuals that bring benefit. The professional development of all staff is a priority and this contributes significantly to the consistently high standards within the school. Morale is excellent and there is a strong team ethos. The work of the school is very well monitored by staff at all levels, and the development of teacher lead learners to manage and monitor the impact of the curriculum is proving highly effective. This has led to staff at all levels becoming more involved in guiding the work of the school and improving standards and provision for all pupils. The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. It is well managed and led by experienced and knowledgeable staff who provide a clear direction. The school gathers and analyses data very effectively, and uses it very well to inform the setting of targets and the tracking of pupils' progress. The governing body, ably led by the versatile chairperson, provides exceptional support and involvement and has a deep knowledge of the school. It makes sure that the school sets itself challenging targets and monitors and evaluates progress towards them rigorously.

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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	2
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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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	2
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 for being so friendly and for making us feel so welcome when we visited your outstanding school. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that are happening in your school.

The best things about your school are:

- you like coming to school and everyone gets along very well together
- your eco council and monitors do a great deal for you and the school
- teachers and classroom assistants work together to help you to learn
- your behaviour is excellent, you work hard and do very well in your lessons and tests
- the school keeps you safe and happy and you care about each other
- your friendship with other schools in Oldham and in other countries
- we know that you enjoy the many extra-curricular activities, especially in sports, arts and music. The shows you create and perform in are very impressive!

What your school needs to do next to make it even better:

- we would like your teachers to give you more helpful comments when they mark your work to help you improve even more.

We appreciated talking to you and watching you learn. Well done. You should be proud of yourselves and your excellent school. We wish you well for the future.