



St Elisabeth's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 106110
Local Authority Stockport
Inspection number 287418
Inspection dates 23–24 October 2006
Reporting inspector Amraz Ali

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	St Elisabeth's Way
School category	Voluntary controlled		Reddish, Stockport
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cheshire SK5 6BL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 4325785
Number on roll (school)	210	Fax number	0161 4327962
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr David Owen
		Headteacher	Mrs S Tootell
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 23–24 October 2006	Inspection number 287418
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Elisabeth's is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. Slightly more pupils than average are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school, a grade II listed building, is the centre of a 50-street community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Parents say that St Elisabeth's is a good school and a special place; inspectors agree with this and with the school's judgement that it provides a good education for its pupils. The inspectors also confirm significant strengths in the pupils' personal development, the good quality care and the exciting curriculum. It provides good value for money.

Achievement is good. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been improving and are now broadly average, although standards in writing are not as high as those in other subjects. Pupils' progress is good overall with particularly good progress in pupils' final year at the school. However, it is uneven over time. This is because the quality of teaching and learning, while good overall, is as yet inconsistent in meeting the needs of all pupils, particularly in providing appropriate support for boys in writing. Pupils' progress is tracked and teaching is evaluated soundly overall. Marking and target setting have improved greatly since the last inspection, although not all teachers use information to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils.

A positive ethos results in the pupils' good behaviour and good personal development and well-being. As one pupil rightly declared, 'Everyone is happy here.' This is reflected in the way that pupils play and cooperate to create a happy and calm school community.

Adults in school take their lead from the headteacher in nurturing good relationships. They know pupils and their families really well and this helps them to settle quickly into the 'school family'. The school meets the needs of the most vulnerable pupils, who are well supported by some skilful and patient teaching assistants. As a consequence, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often make good progress towards their targets. Similarly, the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported.

The school's curriculum is often brought to life through interesting and exciting projects such as the book character day which pupils talked to inspectors about. This results in pupils enjoying their work and producing some striking pieces of good quality. They are rightly proud of their artistic achievements. Links with Reddish Vale Technology College are used to enhance provision by supporting the teaching of French, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology. The good curriculum is complemented by a wide range of after-school clubs and pupils enjoy their learning; this is reflected in their satisfactory attendance. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good.

Leadership and management are good overall as a consequence of recent appointments to the leadership team. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection. These include recent improvements in standards and enhanced provision and resources, including the introduction of interactive whiteboards. The success of recent improvements suggests that the school has good capacity to improve further. The school evaluates itself well, although planning is lengthy and does not focus sufficiently on outcomes for pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing across the school and particularly for boys by the end of Year 2.
- Improve the use of tracking and assessment data to plan lessons that match all pupils' needs.
- Ensure that the school's plans for improvement are closely focused on improving outcomes for pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery and Reception class with standards that are generally below those reached by children of their age. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly average. This represents good progress overall.

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and across Years 1 to 6, although writing is consistently the weakest subject. This is particularly the case for boys in the infant classes. Progress is strongest in pupils' final school year because of the very focused teaching and support for learning.

The school has set challenging targets for Year 6 in 2007 and inspection evidence indicates that these pupils are already making the necessary progress to achieve these.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness through the school's distinctive ethos and its creative curriculum. Pupils' behaviour is good and most have positive attitudes to learning. Older pupils show maturity when they take on responsibilities, for example, as buddies to younger pupils or members of the 'playground squad' to help make playtime a happy time for all. Pupils are confident and polite. They describe their activities with enthusiasm, are proud of the work displayed throughout the school, and they take good care of their own work. Pupils are very involved in school life and make a positive contribution through the active school council, which has a strong voice in the school. They have a good understanding of the need for healthy lifestyles. The work of the learning mentor contributes significantly to pupils' personal development, leading on projects that have helped to improve pupils' self-esteem.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school's leadership and staff have done significant work during the last 12 months to strengthen this aspect of provision. In most lessons, the teaching is good and impacts well on the progress pupils make to effectively develop basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Good questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves and clear explanations help them to understand new concepts and develop good attitudes to learning. Teachers manage pupils well and, as a result, behaviour is usually good. Relationships between staff and pupils are amicable. In weaker but satisfactory lessons, weaknesses in the organisation of activities slow the pace of learning and, on occasions, pupils become restless. Teachers' planning does not always use marking and assessment data to meet the needs of pupils at all levels of ability. In some classrooms, the open plan nature of the school means that the activities of some pupils can disturb the learning of others.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is carefully planned to provide an interesting range of enriching activities. Visits out of school, including an annual residential, and visitors into school, bring a richness of experience into the curriculum. Education for health and safety is good and pupils are well prepared for the lifestyle choices they have to make now and in the future. Thematic days add to pupils' enjoyment of learning, such as an annual book day where pupils dress up as characters from their favorite story. The curriculum in the Nursery and Reception class is well planned for each area of learning and includes good provision for learning through outside play. Music adds a lot of enjoyment to the school day and pupils sing in assemblies tunefully and with enthusiasm.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The safety and well-being of pupils are priorities for the school, with robust procedures followed. Pupils say that they feel safe. Parents really appreciate the care given to their children and the positive impact this has on their children's self-esteem. The school works very well with parents, keeping them informed of their children's progress and operating an 'open door' policy. Targets set for pupils' progress are well used in Years 3 to 6 but are not yet fully understood by pupils in the younger age ranges.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Promoting good care and establishing a happy and calm atmosphere remain at the heart of this school's work and, in this, the school has been extremely successful. The headteacher has recently successfully strengthened the leadership team. Together they have effectively improved provision and raised standards. Teamwork at all levels is a key feature of St Elisabeth's and is underpinning the improvements that are being made. Good improvements have been made to the curriculum, and these help raise pupils' achievement. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses, continually reflecting on its work and accurately identifying what still needs to be improved. The school improvement plan is comprehensive but does not always focus precisely enough on improving outcomes for pupils.

Governors are very supportive and knowledgeable about the school and the context in which it works. They show their commitment by regular attendance at meetings and are now in a better position to provide greater informed challenge to the school. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and their views are sought and acted upon wherever possible. For example, when they wanted to know more about the way mathematics is taught, a successful workshop for parents was organised.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

We very much enjoyed visiting your school. Thank you for the time you took to talk to us and tell us so much about the work you do. We really enjoyed listening to your great singing. We know your school is a very happy, friendly place to learn; you are proud of your school and so are your parents and carers. You told us that you feel safe and well cared for at school and that you like the activities on offer.

We want the school to help you to improve your writing and make sure that everyone, especially the boys in the younger classes, does their best. We would also like teachers to make sure that in all your lessons the work that you do is planned for your own needs and makes better use of your test results and the teacher's assessments. We have asked your headteacher and other leaders in the school to think more carefully about the plans they have to make things better.

We saw that you want to play your part in making your school a good place to learn and that you have all worked together to make St Elisabeth's a good school.

We wish you luck with all the projects you have planned.