

St Hugh's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106340
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	287490
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	552
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Hanley
Headteacher	Mr A McMorrow
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Park Road Timperley Altrincham Cheshire WA15 6TQ
Telephone number	0161 9621852
Fax number	0161 9052380

Age group	3-11
Inspection date	5 July 2007
Inspection number	287490

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a large, church aided school situated in Timperley on the outskirts of Altrincham. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with few pupils coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than in most schools. Similarly, the number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is well below the national average. Most pupils enter the school with attainment levels above those expected nationally. Amongst a number of local and national awards the school has achieved Healthy Schools and Sportsmark Gold accreditation.

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. The headteacher and his staff have been highly successful in creating an environment where pupils feel secure and learning flourishes. A strong faith permeates the school's work and promotes exceptional personal development. Excellent self-evaluation enables the school to have an accurate view of its effectiveness. Pupils flourish in the secure 'family' environment. In response to the excellent care, guidance and support they receive, pupils develop as thoughtful, caring individuals fully meeting the school's high expectations. A notable feature is the way in which pupils show genuine care and concern for others. For example, on their own initiative, pupils have raised considerable amounts for a range of local, national and international charities. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school: 'This school is excellent in every respect, providing an outstanding learning environment.' So are the pupils, who are happy that 'teachers give us hard work to do but we know we can ask if we are not sure'.

Pupils love coming to school. This is illustrated by their excellent attitudes to learning, the way they cooperate so readily, the great enthusiasm they show as they get on with their work and their excellent attendance. Pupils enjoy the outstanding range of activities that the school provides. These enrich their learning both inside and outside the classroom and contribute to an exciting and imaginative curriculum. The school is working towards developing a 'personalised' curriculum to involve pupils in making decisions about their learning. Very good use is made of partnerships with organisations to widen the curriculum in this way. Pupils learn about the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle through their work on healthy eating and through the sporting activities on offer to them. French is taught throughout the school and pupils also have the opportunity to learn Spanish and Italian. Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils understand exactly what is expected of them and respond accordingly.

Pupils achieve very well in response to the outstanding teaching they receive. The majority of children arrive in school with above average levels of attainment. They get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage and successfully build on this through Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above average in English, mathematics and science and have been for many years. Teachers' planning is very good and caters exceptionally well for different levels of ability. Provision for different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with particular gifts or talents, is excellent. The performance of pupils with learning difficulties is much better than the national picture.

Leadership and management are excellent. Despite achieving consistently high standards there is no complacency. The headteacher has built a very effective leadership team and empowers it to take risks and to look for new ways of doing things. The team rises to the challenge and plays a full part in putting the school's vision into practice. The team is well supported by committed staff and an outstanding governing body which knows the school very well and offers the right balance of challenge and support. Excellent progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in offering more opportunities for investigative work in mathematics and science. Everyone involved with the school has the highest aspirations and there is an excellent capacity to deliver them.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the involvement of pupils in making decisions about their own learning to support plans to offer a 'personalised' curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children of all abilities make an excellent start so that by the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority are achieving standards above what is expected of them. The way in which they work independently is a real strength. The rate of progress and achievement of all pupils, regardless of gender, ability or ethnicity, continues as they move through Key Stages 1 and 2. They consistently reach standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science that are significantly higher than national averages. As a result of implementing the 'Big Writing' project, standards in writing have improved. Initial results received for the 2007 national tests at Key Stage 2 show an even greater proportion of pupils reaching the higher national curriculum levels in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make first-rate progress because they are given such excellent support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Because of the strong ethos where every child does matter, pupils become increasingly mature and confident as they progress through the school. They take on responsibilities enthusiastically and develop excellent attitudes to learning. Their obvious enjoyment of learning is reflected in their high attendance rate. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Assemblies enable the pupils to gain excellent insight into spiritual matters, as when Key Stage 1 pupils reflected on their personal achievements and contributions. The rich curriculum enables them to acquire a very good understanding of the diverse beliefs and values of people from different backgrounds. They are very considerate towards each other and show care and concern for others. The school council helps organise support for a wide range of charities. They have also played an active part in making decisions about school projects. Pupils say they feel safe in school and know they can go to an adult if they have any worries. They understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Their excellent achievements in basic skills and personal qualities prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Classrooms are interesting and exciting places to learn. The team of staff in the Foundation Stage have an excellent understanding of how young children learn and they organise work that excites and engages them. Throughout the school excellent relationships between adults and pupils are key factors in its success. Teachers assess pupils' progress well in order to plan lessons that accurately reflect their learning needs. Teaching assistants are highly valued as team members and make a very positive contribution to learning in the school, particularly in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's ethos gives a high priority to building pupils' self-esteem and confidence. This results in them becoming very

effective learners. Parents are understandably very pleased with the high quality teaching and with their children's achievements.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum that contributes very significantly to pupils' learning. The way that it is organised ensures that it enriches pupils' experience and makes learning relevant and enjoyable: 'We don't just do fractions we think about how we would use them.' Throughout the school a strong emphasis is given to the basic skills, but these are delivered in exciting and innovative ways. For example, there are opportunities to learn modern foreign languages and to play a musical instrument. Learning is enriched and made more relevant through a wide range of visits to places of interest, together with contributions from visitors to school. The strong emphasis on personal, social, and health education and citizenship is reflected in the pupils' outstanding personal development. There is an impressive range of additional activities outside class times. These add an exciting dimension to learning and are enjoyed by pupils. Since the previous inspection the school has successfully provided opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations in science and mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All adults place a high priority on pupils' safety and academic achievement. Parents value the high level of care which contributes strongly to pupils' progress, enjoyment and well-being. Provision for pupils' safeguarding and personal welfare include child protection procedures that are firmly in place and reviewed regularly. Pupils rightly feel safe at school, and are comfortable about confiding in staff if the need arises. Excellent induction procedures help children settle into the Foundation Stage. Effective transition arrangements contribute to the smooth transfer to a number of secondary schools. Pupils particularly value the clear academic guidance they are given through their individual targets and teachers' marking of their work, which helps them understand what they need to do to make their work better. The school is looking to offer more opportunities for pupils to make independent decisions about their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management underpin the school's success. Outstanding achievement is the result of the headteacher's vision and the ability of the leadership team to focus on what really matters, that pupils are at the heart of the school and education of the whole child is the core task. Equal opportunity is promoted extremely well, with great care taken to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. School improvement planning is well organised and accurately focuses on the right priorities. The strategy of enabling subject specialist teachers to model good practice in mathematics and science contributes successfully to the high standards. All members of staff feel valued and that their contribution makes a difference is significant. Governors are committed and knowledgeable. They have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive and challenging in the right measure. Based on its current record of improvement, the school has an excellent capacity for continued success.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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.

Annex A

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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed talking to you and finding out about what you enjoy doing. I am delighted to let you know that your school is outstanding.

Things that really stand out are how well you do in English, mathematics and science; how keen you are to take on responsibilities, help to make decisions about your school and care about one another, including raising funds for so many charities; and your behaviour and attitude to work, which are outstanding. The headteacher and all the staff take excellent care of you all and teach you so well. You give an excellent welcome to everyone who visits your school.

You understand your learning targets very well and how they can help your learning to improve. I know that the school is helping you to make decisions about your learning and have suggested that you should be more actively involved in making those decisions. Thank you for helping me to learn so much about your school. You told me how proud you are of your school and I can understand why. I hope you will carry on enjoying learning and helping your teachers.