



St Hilda's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106351
Local Authority Trafford
Inspection number 287496
Inspection dates 11–12 October 2006
Reporting inspector Anna Dawson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Warwick Road South
School category	Voluntary aided		Firswood, Stretford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Manchester, Lancashire
			M16 0EX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 8815466
Number on roll (school)	333	Fax number	0161 8600672
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Ross Malkin
		Headteacher	Mrs Mavis Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	11–12 October 2006	287496

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school is popular and has more children wanting to come than it has places for. It serves the local community where there is some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Although children have a wide range of attainment on entry to the Nursery, the attainment of most is below that usually expected for children of this age, with a significant proportion with well below average social and communication skills in English. There is a high proportion of pupils from mainly Asian and Caribbean backgrounds. Of these, about a third learn English as an additional language and a very small minority are at the early stages of learning English. A new headteacher took up post in February 2006.

The school is part of the Excellence in Cities initiative. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools award and the Activemark Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The pupils receive a good education within a Christian ethos, a view that the school shares. The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate though errs on the modest side in its judgement of pupils' personal development, which is outstanding. The inclusion of all pupils in all of the school activities is excellent. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Consequently, there are excellent relationships between the pupils from different racial and cultural groups. The pupils enjoy school and take full advantage of all the enrichment activities. For example, pupils clearly benefit from the sporting and arts opportunities offered to them and are full of vitality and energy. Pupils flourish because of the high expectations held of each of them. As pupils grow in confidence and independence, they develop extremely good personal and social skills. They know they have an active part to play in school development and take pride in working energetically towards their targets. Pupils' attendance is average. It has risen over the last two years and although the school is working hard to improve it further there is still more to be done.

There is good provision in the Foundation Stage. Children enter the Nursery with below average attainment and a significant minority have well below the usual expectations in personal and social skills and+ are at the very early stages of learning English. Given their starting points, the children make good progress because they are taught well. By the time they leave the Reception classes, standards are generally as expected for children of this age, except for a significant minority who need continuing support for their personal development and in learning English. Teachers' assessments of the standards at the end of the Foundation Stage, though, tend to be over-generous and the staff are working towards improving their accuracy of practice. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school. In Years 1 and 2 pupils build well on their previous learning and attain standards that are above average in mathematics and writing and high in reading. By the time pupils leave Year 6 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils know their individual targets in mathematics and English. However, they do not understand how to make best use of them to improve their work.

The curriculum is good and is meeting the needs of all its pupils. Creative links are being explored between subjects so that pupils enjoy lessons and are motivated to learn. The school uses the expertise of visiting specialist staff and volunteer workers as well as additional activities after school to broaden the curriculum. Teachers stretch the most able pupils and support those needing additional help. Those pupils who are at the early stages of learning English on entry get extremely good bilingual support and rapidly learn to understand and speak English. Leadership, management and governance are good overall. The headteacher has established an extremely clear and shared vision for school development. There are good systems in place for monitoring and evaluating school performance. The school management team, overall, is effective in development of its role. Consequently, pupils' achievement since 2005 has risen in mathematics and writing and the curriculum provision is improved. The school has

made good improvement since the last inspection and there is a good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy and quality of assessing how well pupils are doing in the Foundation Stage.
- Ensure that pupils understand how to use the assessments made of their work in order to improve it.
- Improve attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception and make good progress. By the end of their Reception year, almost all children work at the expected levels. Those at the early stages of learning English quickly start to understand and speak English. Pupils continue to do well in Years 1 and 2, and achievement and standards are high in reading, and good in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. This good progress is built on throughout Years 3 to 6, and pupils continue to achieve well. By the end of Year 6, standards are above the standards expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. While pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics in the last two years has not been quite as good as in science, successful action has brought about improvement and standards are rising. Throughout school, pupils achieve exceptionally well in developing their social and personal skills. There are challenging targets set for pupils' attainment, which are met or exceeded.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' outstanding personal development contributes significantly to their learning. Pupils develop into thoughtful, considerate and mature young citizens by the time they leave. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, for example, recently wrote excellent poems about the lives of 'mixed race' people. The pupils showed their skills of empathy and insight as they imagined that to be mixed race 'is like they don't belong anywhere'. Pupils are well mannered and their behaviour is exemplary. They know that life is full of choices and that their behaviour is a matter of choice. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils take part in many worthwhile activities including harvest collection and much charitable fund-raising. The school council is keen to pursue school improvements and peer mentors in Year 4 help younger pupils in many ways. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards healthy living and are keen to take part in the wide range of activities within the Healthy Schools initiative. They have an excellent awareness of safety matters: for instance, they say 'don't talk to strangers even if they look nice'. There are excellent chances for pupils to prepare for their future economic well-being: for instance, teachers discuss the world of work and the use of money in our everyday lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is successful in helping pupils to learn well and to make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. There is good quality teamwork in planning interesting topics and lessons to challenge pupils to achieve well. Pupils benefit from the stimulating and sometimes exciting lessons. They say they particularly like learning using the interactive whiteboards. The teaching assistants work effectively to help individual and small groups of pupils to catch up on their targets and give valuable support to those pupils with particular learning needs. There is extremely good support for those learning English, both in class and in small-group teaching and as a result the pupils quickly learn to understand and speak with others. The assessment of pupils' work is conscientiously carried out so that all pupils have targets to work towards in English and mathematics. The pupils know what the targets are; however, they do not all have sufficient understanding of how to use the assessments that are made to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is a well thought out and planned curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are developed well. There is particularly good provision for pupils' personal and social development. The curriculum activities are varied and interesting, reflecting the cultural diversity within the school very well. For example, considerable work has been done recently on Black history and achievement, making a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Additional and skilfully planned experiences, for example in sport and the arts by visiting specialists, provide rich opportunities for pupils to deepen their understanding and express their ideas. Good links with other schools are used to good effect to share resources and develop curriculum expertise. For instance, pupils who are either gifted or talented are stretched through enrichment activities. There are numerous activities for pupils to foster their skills and interests, in and after school. These include French, music and sports clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Every child matters at this school; typical comments made by pupils include 'We all enjoy school and feel safe.' Care and guidance is good. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and reviewed regularly. The school promotes health and safety particularly well through personal and social education: for instance, very basic first aid training is provided by St John Ambulance for Year 3 and 4, and Year 6 takes part in the 'crucial crew' initiative where they learn about emergency situations. Pupils receive excellent personal support, and the learning mentor makes a good

contribution. The school has a wealth of information about pupils' academic progress and uses it well to plan the next steps of learning but pupils themselves are at the early stages of using it to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently appointed headteacher has spent time well in developing a shared Christian ethos and vision for the school. Her leadership is inspirational in developing, among the staff the teamwork and culture for improvement. Many parents comment positively on recent developments. For instance, 'There have been big changes for the better' reflects the view of many. The inclusion of all pupils is excellent. The staff work hard to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they can. The teachers generally receive good professional development and carry out their responsibilities well at every level. However, in the Foundation Stage, staff have not received sufficient training to help them judge pupils' attainment accurately. The assessments are overall too generous, but the staff are working towards improving procedures. The school focus for the development of pupils' writing and mathematical skills is undertaken with enthusiasm. As a result, all pupils are meeting challenging targets, particularly the most able, and standards are rising. The monitoring of teaching and learning, the review of pupils' work, and the views of pupils and parents are used successfully to evaluate the school's progress towards its targets. Governors are knowledgeable and very well informed. They praise the growing involvement of the school in the community. They work successfully with the headteacher and the staff to shape the direction and the Christian ethos of the school.

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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	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	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	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	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

As you know, I visited your school recently to find out if the school is giving you the education you should receive. First of all, thank you very much for welcoming me to your school. I enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out about the things you like doing. Your school is a happy place where you told me you enjoy learning in lessons and taking part in school activities. It is a good school.

- Your headteacher is making sure that you all know what the school aims are and that you do your best to work towards them.
- I thought you behaved and cared for one another extremely well.
- You listen well to your teachers and work hard in lessons.
- The staff work hard as a team to make sure you all learn as well as you can.
- I was pleased to see you were proud of your work and that you want to do well.

One of the jobs I have to do when I inspect schools is to see if there are any things, that could make your school even better.

- I looked at the way you learn best. You can improve your work by clearly understanding how to get to your next learning steps.
- The staff in the Foundation Stage should continue to work hard to improve the quality of the assessments they make of the children's progress by the end of their time in Reception.
- I hope you will all try to remind your parents and carers how important it is to attend school, because when you are not there you miss valuable learning time.

I hope that you will carry on enjoying lessons and doing your best.