

St James Church of England Primary School, Daisy Hill

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105209
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308797
Inspection dates	21–22 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Colin Smith

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Grey
Headteacher	Mr J Gregory and Ms S Navin
Date of previous school inspection	14 March 2005
School address	Hindley Road Daisy Hill Westhoughton Bolton Lancashire BL5 2JU
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average in size. It serves a mixed community, although the proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are from Chinese, Indian, Irish or from other or mixed backgrounds. None of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English. A childcare club organised by the school operates on the site. The school has two headteachers, one who has held the post for several years and another appointed in September 2007. The two headteachers work part time but closely together.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The joint leadership is working effectively to provide direction, common purpose and stability. This is helping St James to continue to be a successful school, provide good value for money and maintain good standards through a period of change. The school's caring Christian atmosphere and good curriculum, particularly the wide range of additional activities, are the bedrock of pupils' good personal development. Pupils behave well, enjoy school, act responsibly and appreciate the importance of safe and healthy lifestyles. A small number of parents are unsure about co-leadership or that the school is responsive to their views. However, well over 90% are highly satisfied and comments such as, 'The school offers a good standard of education' and, 'children are well looked after,' typify most parents' views.

Teaching and learning are good overall. In most lessons, all pupils learn successfully. Occasionally, the progress of pupils who find learning difficult is hampered when the work provided is not at the right level for them. Pupils benefit from good personal guidance, which motivates them and increases their confidence. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving but pupils are still unsure of what they need to do to improve. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. They go on to achieve well as they move through school and reach above average standards in English and mathematics by Year 6. However, pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills are not as secure as their calculation skills. Achievement and standards in science are satisfactory and improving, although the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently in all lessons.

Leadership and management are good. The work of the school is kept under review. Weaknesses are identified and worked on. School leaders have set a very challenging target that every pupil should make good progress. Most pupils do, but not all and this is why school leaders judged achievement, teaching and leadership to be only satisfactory. Inspection findings indicate that these areas are good. A small number of pupils, largely those who require learning support, make satisfactory progress and the school is right to aim higher. Overall, the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Previous weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection have been converted into strengths, which illustrates the school's good capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. They start school with knowledge and skills typical for their age. By the end of the Reception year, half the children are working beyond the goals expected for their age. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Learning experiences are well balanced to include key skills of reading and mathematics and good opportunities for creativity. Children's responses are carefully observed, assessed and recorded, which informs the next round of planning. Teaching and learning are good. The activities provided are closely matched to children's different learning needs, which is at the heart of their good language and mathematical development. Children become totally absorbed in learning through play; for example, as railway ticket officers. They behave well and cooperate together. Nursery assistants make a valuable contribution, although when both are in the outside area at the same time, there is no-one on hand to check children's accuracy when counting and adding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils' different learning needs are well provided for in all lessons to enable all of them to achieve successfully.
- Ensure that the more able pupils are challenged sufficiently in all science lessons.
- Improve pupils' problem solving skills to raise achievement in mathematics.
- Ensure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Following the good start in the Foundation Stage, pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2, where standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils now enter Year 3 with higher attainment than in the past and most achieve well from Year 3 onwards. Achievement in English is good and standards in reading and writing are above average in most year groups. In science, although pupils' investigation skills are improving, the more able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently, which holds back their achievement. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement is good overall, although it slows in Years 3 and 4. This is because pupils' understanding of how to apply their skills to solve problems is not secure. The small number of pupils who find learning difficult make satisfactory, rather than good, progress because the work provided does not always match their needs sufficiently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. A love of learning shines through in music, art and the magical moments in assembly. Pupils uphold rules and are respectful and considerate towards each other, although their understanding of cultural diversity is limited. Their behaviour in lessons is exemplary, although not always of such a high standard at lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. Punctuality is improving in response to incentives. Pupils make a good contribution to the community, carrying out their responsibilities with pride and commitment. They relish opportunities to make decisions within the school council. Pupils have good awareness of the importance of diet and exercise and of avoiding dangers, such as drugs. As they move through school, they develop competency in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) and learn to work independently and cooperatively.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The majority of teaching is good with some that is satisfactory. In all lessons, pupils are well managed. Teachers ensure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and usually move lessons along briskly. This keeps pupils interested and encourages them to give of their best. Teachers' secure subject knowledge is evident in their clear explanations and probing questions, often using ICT projections to help pupils visualise new ideas, such as angular measure. The use of assessment is satisfactory. End of topic and year assessments are used well and more consistently than assessment in lessons. Where assessment is good, teachers

clear up any misconceptions and match work carefully to pupils' different learning needs. Hence, all pupils learn successfully. Teaching pupils in ability sets helps to ensure that tasks are at the right level. However, when pupils are all given the same task, the learning of the most and the least able pupils suffers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well-planned rich curriculum is a major factor in pupils' good achievement and personal development. Literacy and numeracy are strongly promoted and pupils' creative talents, for example in music and art, are developed impressively. Topics, themes, ICT and the good range of additional activities make learning enjoyable and nurture pupils' wider interests. The school is providing more opportunities for investigation and problem solving, to compensate for the insufficiency in the past. The strong thread of personal, health and social education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. While the curriculum is well matched to the needs and interests of most pupils, it is not finely tuned enough to cater fully for the needs of the more able pupils and those who require additional support.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The good level of care and trusting relationships ensure that pupils' personal needs are fully met. Appropriate links with health professionals ensure that pupils are safeguarded and barriers to learning are minimised. The school environment is safe, though checks are not always documented. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is satisfactory. Teaching assistants provide good service in literacy, although they are not always on hand in mathematics and science lessons when additional support is needed. Good guidance, provided by the pastoral mentor, enhances pupils' emotional development. However, academic guidance is not as effective. When pupils' work is marked, pointers for improvement are not always included. Individual targets are set in writing but not in other subjects. Consequently, pupils are not always sure of what they need to do to improve. This is why the overall level of care, guidance and support is satisfactory but not as good as the school believes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The partnership between the co-headteachers has prompted a thorough school review and united staff in maintaining the school's strengths and tackling weaker areas. New management strategies are paying dividends. For example, assessments are analysed to identify faltering progress and subject leaders are given time to check on the performance of staff and pupils. In addition, expectations are being raised of what each pupil can achieve. These are helping the school identify and remedy weaknesses, for example in pupils' problem-solving and investigation skills, and to target resources more purposefully. Some of the written plans and evaluations lack clarity, for example in providing equal opportunities. However, governors benefit from the regular flow of information, which assists their decision making and helps them to hold the school to account. These factors have improved the quality of leadership and management since the previous inspection.

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Annex A

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

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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	3

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

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

My colleagues and I enjoyed the visit to your school and would like to thank you for answering our questions so politely and helpfully. I would like to tell you what we found out.

Your parents are correct in their belief that St James is a good school. Most of you make good progress and reach good standards in English and mathematics. You also achieve well in art and music. The school's good curriculum makes learning enjoyable and helps you to learn successfully in other subjects, such as ICT. You do well because of good teaching in most lessons and the fact that most of you work hard.

It is evident that in school you are safe and well cared for. Teachers, support staff and the pastoral mentor encourage you to try hard and show respect and consideration towards others. You show that you listen by behaving well.

Your headteachers run the school well. They check what happens in lessons and how well you do with your assessments, to find out where improvements are needed.

Inspectors aim to find out what the school does well and try to make it even better. I have asked the school to do the following things to help with this.

- In most lessons, teachers provide harder work for those who find learning easier and extra help for those who need it. I want teachers to do this in every lesson.
- I have asked teachers to make sure that those of you who find learning easier than most are given more difficult work in all science lessons.
- I have asked teachers to improve your problem-solving skills so that you do even better in mathematics.
- I know that you have individual writing targets. I have asked teachers to make sure that you know exactly what you need to do to improve in all your other subjects. You can help by trying hard to achieve your targets.