

St Philip's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	105509
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308877
Inspection date	2 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Wendy McCormack
Headteacher	Mr J Dalby
Date of previous school inspection	29 September 2003
School address	Loxford Street Hulme Manchester Lancashire M15 6BT
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Age group	3-11
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Amended Report Addendum

Staff assess and record individuals' skills development in detail but they do not always make the most of their desire to communicate.

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' achievement and rate of progress; the quality of teaching and learning; the impact of the school's many partnerships on the quality of its provision; and pupils' enjoyment of learning. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. However, evidence showed that when judging every aspect of its provision to be good in its self-evaluation, the school was demonstrating its awareness that nothing is ever perfect and its constant determination to improve. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; discussions with members of staff, pupils and the chair of governors; and the many questionnaires returned by parents.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves an inner city area that has undergone much redevelopment over recent years and where many families experience significant social and economic disadvantage. The school receives extra funding to support the 80% of pupils who belong to a wide range of minority ethnic groups. Around one third of pupils speak English as an additional language. Unusually high numbers join or leave the school partway through their primary education. A broadly average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities but three times the national average is eligible to receive a free school meal. The school holds the Manchester Inclusion Standard Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Philip's is an outstanding school. It provides an oasis of optimism and community cohesion for its pupils, the majority of whom face huge barriers to learning. It also helps them achieve exceptionally well. Parents express their appreciation of the school in words such as, 'It does a fantastic job of nurturing and caring for the pupils' and 'It respects and encourages the children to acknowledge, understand and celebrate the diversity within the local area.' The school's success can be explained by the excellent quality of its leadership, teaching and support for individuals. Together, these ensure that pupils enjoy learning, grow in self-belief and develop a determination to achieve that bodes very well for their future economic well-being.

Children entering the Nursery, and the majority of those joining the school partway through their education, have very low skills in all areas of learning but particularly in their ability to communicate. The school's highly skilled assessment of their individual needs and its precisely tailored support ensure that pupils of every age group make sustained and rapid progress. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are somewhat below average and by the end of Year 6 they are broadly average. Particularly impressive is that for the past two years the Key Stage 2 results in English have been above average. The significant rise in 2006 was built on in 2007, when the school's efforts to improve the quality of pupils' writing really bore fruit. It is now placing an equally sharp focus on increasing pupils' problem-solving skills in its determination to raise standards in mathematics in a similar fashion. Pupils of different ability, ethnicity, first language and gender all make excellent progress during their time at the school, with Black African pupils doing especially well.

Pupils say that their teachers are 'persuasive about encouraging you to do things', 'only strict to help you get along' and 'give you really challenging work, for instance in maths.' Such comments exemplify the very good relationships that abound throughout the school and pupils' understanding that they are there to learn. Teachers plan interesting activities and explain them clearly so that pupils set to work with a will. They skilfully adapt the levels of challenge for those of different abilities, making good use of teaching assistants and other adults to ensure all are working purposefully. Teachers effectively encourage pupils to discuss their thinking in pairs and groups, including with home language partners when appropriate, and then to explain their working and thoughts to others. They mark pupils' work very supportively but seldom provide precisely worded guidance to help them improve it.

The curriculum supports pupils' learning well. Information and communication technology is now used across a range of subjects - a good improvement since the previous inspection. It is being used particularly well to provide challenge for pupils identified as gifted and talented, capitalising on one of the school's highly effective partnerships with others. The Year 4 and 5 'newspaper group', complete with their reporters' notebooks, decide on content, create puzzles, research, interview, write, edit, set out, produce and market 'St Philip's News' which is crammed full of articles to interest fellow pupils. The curriculum is enriched by special events such as the extremely well planned Black History Day, held during the inspection, that highlighted pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all ages relished the opportunity to work with a dynamic specialist dance teacher towards the end of day assembly performance. The confidence and enthusiasm of older pupils' dance were only topped by that of the Nursery and Reception children that prompted spontaneous clapping to the beat from the rest of the pupils. In other sessions pupils learned about, for example, Aboriginal culture or Nelson Mandela's vision for a collaborative world. In Year 5, pupils made posters using paper

that they had marbled earlier, blending a range of colours to create a beautiful picture as outlined in Martin Luther King's speech, 'I have a dream'.

The school's outstanding support for individuals enables them to begin to develop and realise their own dreams. Staff use their awareness of and sensitivity to pupils' challenging home lives and experiences as a catalyst for high expectations rather than an excuse for anything less. There is excellent liaison with a plethora of outside agencies, ranging from music therapy to a local partnership supporting those at an early stage of learning English. This, combined with regular progress checks, ensures that the school provides extra input when and where pupils need it. Pupils willingly seek help, confident it will be forthcoming. Procedures are in place to promote health and safety and child protection. Pupils' personal development is good. Their behaviour inside is excellent but, on occasion, it becomes less controlled outside. Most pupils attend regularly but some extended illness and holidays mean that overall attendance levels fell below average in the past year. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy living and are keen to contribute to the community, although there is no school council through which to air their views.

At the hub of this highly focused and happy school is a modest, thoughtful and well-organised headteacher whose clear vision and commitment inspire all staff to work hard in pupils' best interests. Leaders at all levels effectively evaluate the school's strengths and weaker areas and assess the success of actions taken. The school is an exciting place to be and gives its pupils an outstanding education. It has excellent capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good quality provision in the Nursery and Reception classes ensures that the children build firm foundations for their future learning. Staff assess and record individuals' skills development in detail but they do not always make the most of their desire to communicate. Children make good progress in all areas of learning from a very low starting point but their skills, particularly in communication and mathematics, are still well below average by the time they enter Year 1. Despite being physically separate, the two year groups collaborate well so that children's experience is seamless. For example, during the inspection Reception children looked at maps of Africa, discussed the book *Handa's Surprise* and made fruit kebabs. Elsewhere, Nursery children created carnival masks, in reference to the movement of Black Africans to the Caribbean, and programmed a small robot to 'steal' fruit from Handa's basket. Later the two groups swapped tasks. Both sets of children worked happily in a classroom different from their own because the staff's consistency of approach and very good pastoral care helped them to know what was expected and to grow in confidence.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking consistently provides clear guidance for pupils about how to improve their work.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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	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?	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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

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

I greatly enjoyed my recent visit to your school and would like to thank you all for being so welcoming and friendly. Particular thanks should go to those of you who gave up some of your lunchtime to help me understand what it is like to be a pupil at St Philip's. You all told me how much you enjoy your school and this doesn't surprise me at all because it is truly outstanding.

St Philip's has lots of strong points but best of all it helps each one of you, whatever your background or ability, to make really good progress and achieve well. It is great that, although many of you have lots to catch up on when you join the school, by the time you leave, your standards are in line with those that most other children in the country achieve, and are even better in English. Well done! This is because your teachers organise interesting things to do and give you lots of help when you don't understand. It is also because you like working hard and you form very good relationships with adults and other pupils so that you feel safe in school and can concentrate on learning. All staff look after you really well and help you to value and build on your special talents. The reason that everything works so well in your school is because your headteacher and other senior staff aren't self-satisfied. They are constantly working out how to improve things. I have suggested to them that they should try to make sure that when teachers mark your work, they give you clear hints about how to improve it. From talking with some of you, I know that you would really appreciate this. Your jobs will be to continue to enjoy learning and working as hard as you do at the moment, and to attend school whenever you possibly can.

I feel really lucky to have been at your school on your Black History Day. It was so interesting to see all the different work that you were doing and to hear about it in assembly. As for your dancing - I shall certainly remember that for a while, especially the way you all joined in clapping when the Nursery and Reception children were performing!