

All Souls Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105811
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308957
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Gary Fieldhouse
Headteacher	Ms Gaynor Rennie
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2005
School address	Rye Street Heywood Lancashire OL10 4DF
Telephone number	01706 360027
Fax number	01706 360027

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	15–16 January 2008
Inspection number	308957

© Crown copyright 2008

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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

All Souls' is an average-sized school. The socio-economic circumstances of the area it serves are broadly average. Almost all pupils are White British. A very small proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Eligibility for free school meals is below average and is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than average, but the proportion with a statement for their special educational need is above average. The school has gained several awards including Investors in People, Healthy School Standard, Eco School Status (silver) and the International School Award. Following the inspection in 2005, the school was without its permanent headteacher and deputy headteacher for a short period of time and was led by an acting headteacher from the local authority. There have also been significant staff changes in Year 1 and 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Some aspects of its work are outstanding, such as the care, guidance and support for pupils that very successfully underpin the excellent quality of their personal development. The school's extensive partnerships with the parish, business, local schools and those abroad, as well as external agencies, contribute significantly to the quality of pupils' education. The leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are exceptional. They work together extremely effectively and have a very clear-sighted vision for the school's future. All staff share a common sense of purpose and work together very well as a team. School self-evaluation is robust and clearly linked to future development planning. As a consequence, the school knows where improvements are needed and plans are in hand to address these. The school recognises that achievement in writing, for example, is not as good as in mathematics and science and that the more able pupils throughout the school do not achieve as well as they should. The points for improvement identified at the inspection in 2005 have been addressed very well. Successful initiatives, such as time challenges in lessons, have been introduced and are helping to close the gap between the performance of boys and girls. All these strengths demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

Children start Nursery with skills that are below those typical for their age. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are broadly above average, although standards are not as high in English as in mathematics and science. Achievement is good in mathematics and science but satisfactory overall in English. This is because, although standards in reading are consistently high throughout the school, standards in writing hold back pupils' achievement. The school has started to put this right, but there has not been enough time for the outcomes of this work to be seen in national assessment and test results. Achievement of the more able pupils varies from year to year. In 2007, although slightly more pupils reached the higher levels in mathematics and science than in previous years, fewer did so in English. This is because work set is not sufficiently challenging for the more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well because the work they are given is carefully tailored to their specific needs.

Pupils' progress is good because teaching and learning are good; and some teaching is outstanding. Teaching is adept at capturing pupils' attention through the very good use of new technology. Planning is detailed and clearly reflects the school's rich curriculum. However, work is not always sharply matched to meet the needs of the more able pupils. It is either too easy or too hard and, as a result, learning slows for these pupils. The use of specialist teaching, for example in music, promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning considerably and greatly enhances their confidence and self-esteem. A view expressed by one pupil typifies that of many about the impact of such provision: 'Singing fills you with joy and excitement!'

Pupils say they enjoy every minute at school. They speak with great enthusiasm about the outstanding opportunities they have beyond lessons to develop their interests and talents, including circus skills and French. They relish the responsibilities they have and carry them out in a diligent and mature manner. There is an exceptionally strong focus on personal, social, emotional and health education. Parents confirm this by their comments that 'children grow in confidence and esteem and any problems are quickly nipped in the bud'. Pupils, too, comment very favourably on how safe they feel, the sense of discipline and fairness that pervades the school and that, 'teachers are always there to help you'. Behaviour is outstanding and there is a high level of respect shown by all pupils. Their understanding of healthy and safe lifestyles,

as well as aspects such as environmental awareness and global citizenship, is very impressive and prepares them very well for their lives beyond school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. As a result, children make good progress and achieve well. By the time they transfer to Year 1 most reach the nationally expected standards, although their skills in writing are not as strong as those in other areas of learning. The good curriculum provides a suitable balance between activities that children can choose for themselves and those led by an adult. In the Nursery class, provision for extending activities and learning outdoors is well planned and exciting. In the Reception class, fewer activities are planned in their outdoor area and this restricts children's opportunities to extend their skills outside in the different areas of learning. The good provision of staff to work in the Foundation Stage ensures a high level of care. Personal and social development is promoted well. Consequently, children understand class routines and quickly settle into school life. They play and cooperate together well. They make a good start in learning to read, but opportunities to develop their early writing skills are too few and are not emphasised enough in each area of learning. This holds back their progress in developing early writing skills. The new Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership and has clear plans to develop the phase further. Assessment systems are good. Children are carefully assessed on entry and this ensures any concerns are quickly identified and addressed. Regular assessment of how children are doing contributes well to the overall picture of children's development and achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in writing throughout the school.
- Ensure work is sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils in all subjects.
- Provide more outdoor activities for the Reception class to extend the development of their skills in all areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In recent years, standards by the end of Year 6 have varied. However, there has been a steady trend of improvement, particularly in mathematics and science, and standards in these subjects are now broadly above average and achievement is good. The rate of improvement in English is not as strong overall. This is because, despite high achievement in reading, the school's focus on improving pupils' writing skills did not have the impact that was anticipated. As a result, pupils' progress and achievement in English overall, whilst satisfactory, are not as good as in mathematics and science. The school's very rigorous self-evaluation highlighted this and a new approach to teaching writing has been introduced but it is too early to judge the impact of this. The achievement of the more able pupils varies. In 2007, although in mathematics and science slightly more pupils attained the higher levels than the national picture, in English, fewer pupils did so. This work is not always sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils so they do not make as much progress in lessons as they should.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's rich curriculum contributes to their extremely good understanding of cultures and traditions other than their own. Their awareness of life in a multi-ethnic society is very good. High quality daily assemblies and an extensive range of creative opportunities help to develop pupils' extremely good spiritual awareness. Pupils are very polite and friendly. Their excellent manners are a striking feature; for example, they stand up without prompting when an adult enters their classroom, and all visitors are greeted by their given name. Pupils have 'a voice' in the school. They are very confident their views are taken into account and feel they make a difference to school life. For example, members of the curriculum committee, who meet to offer their views on how the school's provision in this area can be improved, are involved in observations of lessons. They meet the class teacher afterwards to offer their views on how lessons can be improved from a pupil's perspective. Pupils also make an excellent contribution to the local and wider community. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance and in their very good attitudes to work in lessons.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Secure and harmonious relationships are a consistent strength of lessons. As a result, pupils try hard and are generally fully engaged in activities. Skilful questioning extends pupils' skills and knowledge well. Strategies to accelerate pupils' learning through 'talking partners', for example, are used well. When practice is outstanding, expectations of what pupils can achieve are very high, work is very precisely matched to pupils' abilities and learning is rapid. However, this is not always the case and work set is sometimes not sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. As a result, learning slows. Teaching assistants work closely with the pupils who find learning more difficult. They show these pupils how to take small steps in their learning, and so they are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. Very occasionally, teaching assistants do too much for pupils and this inhibits their progress and independence. At its best, marking is helpful and constructive and clearly pinpoints what pupils need to do to improve. Display throughout the school is exceptional and a very visual tool that adds meaning to learning and motivates pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is imaginative, vibrant and carefully organised. It is broad, balanced and meets requirements. The programme to promote reading is excellent and the impact of this can be seen in the consistently high standard of reading throughout the school. There are growing opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in different subjects, but these are recent and it is too early to judge their impact on raising standards. The school's outstanding emphasis on personal, social and health education and citizenship develops pupils into mature, articulate and confident young citizens who are very well prepared for their next stage of education. Very recently, the school has linked subjects together within themes, with a greater emphasis on the development of pupils' key skills and knowledge. The use of information and communication

technology in other subjects is greatly improved since the previous inspection and supports pupils' learning very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Levels of care are outstanding and parents acknowledge this as a significant strength of the school. Teachers know pupils very well, which does much to ensure that each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. Child protection arrangements and those to safeguard pupils are fully in place. Health, safety and welfare arrangements are excellent. There is very good support and guidance for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Very good systems are in place to identify needs and set appropriate targets for learning. Vulnerable pupils are nurtured and are able to join in all school activities as a result. Pupils appreciate the 'worry boxes' in which they can place their concerns and the 'kindness coin' that they pass round as appreciation of a good or kind deed. Almost all parents hold the school in high regard. Academic guidance is comprehensive. Teachers and teaching assistants are fully aware of pupils' needs, and provide very effective guidance to help them improve. Ways of involving pupils in assessing their own understanding and progress are very good, and pupils are clear about the learning targets they have to reach.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher bring different strengths to the leadership and management of the school. Together with the very knowledgeable governing body, they have a clear picture of the school's performance, and what needs to be done to bring about improvement. For example, the rigorous system that enables the school to track and monitor pupils' progress, together with thorough self-evaluation, showed that pupils were not making the progress they should in writing. As a result, new arrangements to teach writing have been introduced recently but it is too soon for these to have had a measurable impact on achievement and standards. The school ensures that all pupils are fully involved in school life, whatever their background, ability or particular needs. However, it recognises that it needs to boost the performance of the more able pupils to ensure that they achieve their potential. Arrangements to train and develop staff are very good, and teachers value the opportunities they have to further their careers. Several subject leaders are very new to their roles, but approaches to checking quality and the progress pupils make in their areas of responsibility are developing well. Governors have an astute grasp of the school's strengths and look closely at pupils' progress; they are not afraid to ask challenging questions.

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?	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?	1
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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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?	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

Inspection of All Souls' Church of England Primary School, Heywood,
OL10 4DF

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we inspected your school and for the lovely card you made and presented to Mr Peacock and myself before we left. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things you do.

All Souls' is a good school and some of the things about it are outstanding - for example, the way the adults care extremely well for you. This helps you to feel safe and happy at school. We were impressed at how much you know about keeping yourselves safe and healthy. Your behaviour is excellent, even though it rained so much during the inspection and you could not get out to play every break and lunchtime. We were impressed with how much you care for and look after each other. It is clear that you enjoy school and all the activities you take part in a great deal. We enjoyed reading and hearing about your environmental work, your school council and the circus skills!

By the end of Year 6, the standards you reach in mathematics and science are above average. They are not as high in English because you have, in the past, not had enough opportunities to practise writing in many different ways in all your lessons. We have asked your school to make sure that you reach higher standards in writing. Sometimes in lessons, those children who learn faster than others are not given work that really gets the most out of them. We have asked the school to find ways to make sure that these children have more challenging work. Nursery children have an exciting outdoor area that they use during the day. We have asked your school to ensure that children in the Reception class also have as many activities in their outdoor area so they can choose plenty of different tasks either inside or outside.

The governors work very closely with your headteacher and help her plan what needs to be improved. You can help, too, by continuing to make your suggestions through the school committees, and by always trying your best, working hard and remembering your learning targets. Kindest regards to you and thank you once again for being so helpful.