

Standish St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106467
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309137
Inspection date	13 September 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	535
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Val Barr
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Kneale
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Rectory Lane Standish Wigan Lancashire WN6 0XB
Telephone number	01942 776393
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and serves an area of mostly private housing in a semi-rural setting. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those entitled to receive free school meals are below average. Overall attainment on entry to the school is average. The school holds the Healthy Schools award, Artsmark gold award and Eco School award. In addition the school is a host school for the Strategic Leadership of Information and Communication Technology.

The inspector investigated the following issues: achievement and standards; personal development and well-being; the quality of teaching and learning; care, guidance and support; and the impact of leadership and management, with particular emphasis on pupils' involvement in assessment, on teaching and learning, on the curriculum and on provision in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff and pupils; and the parents' questionnaires. Some aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

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 where pupils are valued as individuals and excel in all they do. Parents and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about all aspects of school life. A response to the parental questionnaire sums up the views of many by stating 'This school is excellent. The children are inspired by what they learn.' The school achieves its expressed intention to 'Focus on raising standards and promote personal well-being, the whole school community striving for excellence.' Its national test results in English, mathematics and science over recent years show that pupils' achievement is outstanding. The main reason for the school's success is its continuous sharply focused quest always to improve on its best. A combination of outstanding leadership and management, highly effective teaching and learning, innovative approaches to the curriculum, and other activities that meet the range of pupils' interests, underpins everything the school does. Outstanding care includes robust safeguarding procedures and guidance and support, and these contribute greatly to the pupils' academic and personal success. Exceptionally positive relationships ensure that all pupils feel safe and know who to turn to if help is needed. Staff have a high degree of commitment to the pupils in their care.

Pupils make outstanding progress and standards are well above the national average

at the end of both key stages. All pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make excellent progress. The school builds on the good start that children make in Nursery and Reception so that by the end of Year 2 standards are well above average at all levels in reading, writing and mathematics. The school ensures that pupils continue to make rapid progress in Years 3 to 6, with test results consistently showing well above average results in English, mathematics and science. By the end of Year 6 many pupils are working at levels higher than typically expected for their ages. This is especially so in science, where in the 2007 tests almost 70% of pupils exceeded the standard expected for their age. Because the school has detailed and well analysed assessments throughout, older pupils are prepared exceptionally well for the next stage of their education. A major success has been the school leadership initiative to maximise pupils' learning through grouping pupils according to ability in literacy and numeracy and providing well planned opportunities to develop thinking skills and pupils' personal, social and health education. Decisive leadership is highly effective. Examples of this are evident in the way pupils are given regular opportunities to be involved in setting precise learning targets, and the well planned use of information and communication technology to support the curriculum. What is very apparent across the school is the emphasis on opportunities to develop pupils' key skills in all subjects, suitably celebrated through high quality displays throughout the school.

As a result of the work culminating in Healthy School status pupils are very aware of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. There are very many opportunities for them to take part in sporting activities, and levels of participation are high. The pupils have a high degree of self-confidence and self-esteem, which enables them to behave outstandingly well and really enjoy the wide range of opportunities the school provides, including residential visits. Their high level of enjoyment can be seen in their consistently well above average attendance. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils in the community. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. They are proud to take on responsibilities, including acting as play leaders and school council members.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs exceptionally well and pupils speak of learning being very interesting inside the classroom and in the outside areas. In their sustained quest to improve, school leaders work in teams to evaluate and develop specific areas of the curriculum, for example introducing the teaching of modern foreign languages. A current focus on linking subjects in the curriculum is translated effectively into meaningful learning opportunities for pupils. Short practical or physical activities break the morning and provide considerable variety. The very rapid progress pupils make throughout the school is the result of outstanding teaching. Because the leadership team ensures that all members of staff have up-to-date assessment information teachers are able to plan challenging work that meets a range of pupils' needs very well. The data is used exceptionally well to plan learning and to shape the curriculum. The school is at an early stage of personalising learning and organising the curriculum in a more flexible way so that it responds even more to pupils' individual needs. Major strengths in teaching include excellent use of the process of setting targets and marking to involve pupils effectively in their own learning, high quality relationships and very high expectations.

Outstanding leadership and management quickly addressed the improvements required from the last inspection. Evaluation is used very effectively to focus on key areas for improvement, ensuring that the school moves from strength to strength. The accurate self-evaluation ensures that the school knows itself well. Rigorous monitoring by the leadership team has led to appropriate actions being taken to ensure that the school meets challenging targets and maintains high levels of achievement. The school expects high standards and has exceeded its challenging targets consistently. The governors play a full part in the school's strategic leadership and effective management. For example, governors are linked to subjects and provide evaluative reports to the full governing body. The headteacher and the school's leadership team are successful in providing the highest quality academic and personal education for each pupil. As such, the school is in a position of considerable strength to improve even further. It provides outstanding value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage are at a level that is typical for their age. The school recently received an award from the local authority for the quality of its work. Extensive data indicates that children make good progress in all the areas of learning, including their personal development, exceeding expected standards when entering Year 1. They enjoy school very much and are very well aware of the needs of others because of a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Teaching is very good and leaders of this stage have a very accurate understanding of the strengths in teaching and learning and areas to be developed.

What the school should do to improve further

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

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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 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	1
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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 promised the children I spoke with that I would let you know what I thought. I am pleased to tell you that your school is one of the very best I have been in and that you attend a really outstanding school.

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; your first-class behaviour and attitude to work; and the way 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 asked them to build on your involvement to help you make personal choices about how best to learn. Thank you for helping me to find out so much about your school. Keep on working hard, and you will carry on playing a major part in ensuring that your school continues to be highly regarded by all who come into contact with it.