

St David Haigh and Aspull CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106519
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	309152
Inspection date	29 November 2007
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	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elspeth Randall
Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Boulton
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Copperas Lane Haigh Wigan Lancashire WN2 1PA
Telephone number	01942 831310
Fax number	01942 833818

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The following issues were investigated: pupils' achievement in the main subjects; teachers' use of assessment in setting challenges and targets according to pupils' different learning needs; and the extent to which leaders check the work of the school to raise standards. Evidence was gathered from observation of lessons, pupils' work, discussions with staff, governors and pupils and a scrutiny of school documents and questionnaires. Other 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.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average in size. The proportions of pupils entitled to a free school meal and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are broadly average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are of Asian or mixed backgrounds. A number of staff changes have taken place since 2005, including the appointment of headteacher and deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's effectiveness and value for money are satisfactory. A major strength is the very high level of care and support provided, particularly for the most vulnerable pupils. Secure procedures are in place to ensure pupils' safety. When they experience difficulties, parents and health professionals are consulted immediately. Consequently, many barriers to learning are removed successfully. Parents are very appreciative of the school's work and comments such as, 'Teachers are very caring.' and 'Nothing is too much trouble.' are typical of their views.

Pupils' personal development is good. All aspects of their spiritual, moral and social development and of their cultural awareness are well developed. Behaviour is good and often exemplary in lessons. Pupils have excellent awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles and their contribution to the school community as play-leaders and school councillors is outstanding. These factors are attributable to the school's very effective personal, social and health education programme. Attendance is average and pupils enjoy school, not least because of the many additional activities provided to nurture their talents and interests.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, though good in Reception and very good in Years 5 and 6. School assessments indicate that most pupils make satisfactory progress in other year groups but achieve better in some subjects than others. Pupils who receive additional learning support make good progress, as do the small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Boys often achieve well, whereas the achievement of girls and the more able pupils is mainly satisfactory. However, the more able pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not all achieve as well as they should, particularly in reading, which is why standards are below average overall by the end of Year 2. From Year 3 onwards pupils achieve very well in reading and writing and make satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Consequently, standards are above average in English and broadly average in mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Although the curriculum is satisfactory, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate and solve problems. This holds back their achievement in science and mathematics. Following a marked rise in standards since the previous inspection, attainment has fallen since 2005. In response, teachers are setting more challenging targets and checking more rigorously that pupils are on course to reach them. This is helping to reverse recent trends.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons ensures that pupils give their best. Pupils' enthusiasm sparkles when lively activities such as mathematical games are introduced, because 'learning is fun.' Lessons are well prepared and teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them. The assessment of pupils' learning is satisfactory. In English and mathematics the information is used very effectively to provide activities that are very well matched to the needs of pupils who find learning difficult. This helps them to improve their literacy and numeracy skills and to achieve well. The more able pupils receive more demanding tasks, although not always sufficiently challenging. For example, infant pupils' learning is restricted when they spend too much time colouring and cutting out. Pupils learn best when teachers involve all of them and move the lesson on at brisk pace. Occasionally, when the pace slows their interest wanes. Pupils are guided satisfactorily on how to improve. Their English books are marked very constructively, a significant factor in their very good achievement in writing. However, in mathematics and science, pointers for improvement are not always provided. A promising start has been made in setting individual improvement targets, although, as yet, pupils are not able to recall them readily.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher and staff have been very successful in creating a happy, very caring school in which pupils' personal development flourishes. The desire and commitment to raise standards is evident in the improvements in writing and information and communication technology. School self-evaluation is largely accurate, although too optimistic in judging that all aspects of the school's work are good. Senior staff and subject leaders observe lessons, examine pupils' work and analyse assessments conscientiously. As a result, the main priorities for improvement are correctly identified and acted upon. This is why, despite the recent decline, standards are at least as high as they were at the time of the previous inspection in mathematics and science and higher in English. However, the precise nature of the areas for development is not always probed sufficiently. This means that future planning does not sufficiently focus on exactly what needs to be done to make a difference. For example, to improve pupils' investigation skills to raise their achievement in science. That said, a powerful tool for improvement is emerging in the way pupils' individual progress is tracked. Any faltering progress is quickly identified and swift action follows to put pupils back on track. More importantly, teachers are beginning to use the information to improve aspects of their teaching. This is helping to ensure that the school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory and increasing. Governors provide good support and realise the need to work alongside the teaching staff to improve performance.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children enter school with good social skills, but their literacy and numeracy skills are largely below those expected for their age. Good provision in Reception enables children to achieve well and reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. The Foundation Stage benefits from good leadership and management. The Reception class unit is particularly well organised. A vast array of stimulating activities is provided. These are carefully structured to ensure that children's capacity to learn through play is maximised. Careful observations are made of their responses. Adults use these assessments well to plan children's next steps in their learning. Good teaching of specific skills, such as counting, reading and sequencing, is a significant factor in their good progress. Children's happiness and excitement in learning is evident in the delight and confidence they show, for example, in dressing up and acting the parts of characters from the 'Wizard of Oz'.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the challenge in teaching to raise achievement in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve pupils' problem solving and investigation skills to raise their achievement in mathematics and science.
- Improve school planning by identifying more precisely what needs to be done to raise achievement within a subject.

A small proportion of those schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next Section 5 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?	3
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

Inspection of St David Haigh and Aspull Church of England Primary School, Wigan, WN12 1PA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to you because you were so polite, friendly and helpful. Now, I would like to share my findings with you. Your school is satisfactory overall. However, there are many good features.

Most of you achieve well in English because your reading skills are good and you are confident writers. In mathematics, your calculation skills are secure but some of you need more help to solve mathematical problems. Your progress in science could be better if you learnt how to think scientifically, investigate and find out more for yourselves.

Teaching is mainly satisfactory. It is good in Reception and very good in Years 5 and 6. In these classes, pupils learn more quickly because the activities provided are more challenging. In all classes, teachers make your learning interesting by arranging visits and after school activities. I think this is why you enjoy school. Watching you at work and at play, I was impressed by your good behaviour and the concern you show towards others. You know how to keep yourselves safe and many of you have special school responsibilities, which you carry out exceptionally well.

Your headteacher and staff ensure the school runs smoothly and do everything possible to take good care of you. They are trying to improve the school further and I want to help them so I have asked your headteacher and staff to:

- increase the challenge in lessons to improve the progress that pupils make in Years 1 and 2, particularly the more able ones in reading
- improve your problem solving and investigation skills to increase your achievement in mathematics and science
- make sure that they pinpoint exactly what needs to be done to make these improvements.