

Hoddlesden St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119455
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313301
Inspection date	13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	141
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Kevin Young
Headteacher	Mrs Bernadette Bickerton
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Bayne Street Hoddlesden Darwen Lancashire BB3 3NH
Telephone number	01254 701940
Fax number	01254 707390

Age group	4-11
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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' progress in Key Stage 1; the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1; and the impact of the work of subject co-ordinators. The inspector gathered evidence from school documentation and national published assessment data; interviews with pupils, parents, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated 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

This below average-sized primary school serves a mainly White British population in an area which has some social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Healthy School, Activemark and Eco Award – Bronze.

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 with some outstanding features that provides good value for money. This is a little better than the judgement the school has made about itself. It is clear that there has been significant improvement over the last four years, particularly in the national test results at the end of Year 6. 'I would recommend St Paul's School to my friends and family,' sums up the appreciative comments of parents who much value the work done by the school.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are happy, safe and secure in the school and they thoroughly enjoy all that the school offers, in terms of activities and excellent opportunities to take responsibility and to make a contribution to the community. For example, the very lively and highly enthusiastic school council runs its own budget and advises on improvements to playground provision. Younger pupils appreciate the efforts of Year 6 play leaders to include them in activities at break times. Exceptional moral and social development results in excellent behaviour and attitudes to school. Attendance is above average. Pupils across the school have a very clear view of the need to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle, and this is promoted very strongly by the curriculum.

Achievement is good and standards are above average. Pupils are very well prepared for future education and life in general. From the good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception), pupils make good progress in their learning and this culminates in significantly above average standards in Year 6. The rising trend in results shows the school moving from below local and national levels in 2003 to being well above them in the last two years. This improvement has been due to challenging leadership, a better curriculum, improved academic guidance and strong, enthusiastic teaching. Parents very much appreciate this, and pupils told the inspector that they really liked their teachers for making learning fun and interesting. Pupils' attainment on entry to Year 1 is average. Standards at the end of Year 2 have also been rising and are generally above average. Early indications from the 2007 national tests have shown a drop, but this can be attributed to higher numbers of pupils with extra learning needs. Currently, good teaching in Key Stage 1 is ensuring pupils are making good progress and the detailed tracking of their achievements shows this clearly, particularly in writing. Girls tend to do better than boys but this is being successfully addressed by the school through a range of measures, including using more appealing reading books and providing more visual stimuli for learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those cared for by the local authority make good progress. These pupils benefit from the extra support they receive, either through direct contact with staff or additional provision tailored to their needs.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In their written comments to the inspector, parents are rightly appreciative of the school's good learning environment. Teachers plan well and match tasks accurately to pupils' individual needs. The very good relationships with pupils aid class management and mean that pupils' learning has very few disruptions and lessons have a brisk pace. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable, well briefed and provide challenge for the pupils they work with. In the best lessons, ongoing assessment is used well to check whether pupils are meeting the success criteria for their learning. The teacher then provides guidance appropriate to pupils' needs. The use of assessment information is a big improvement in the school, and the strongest practice is in Years 3 to 6. The school is rightly aware that further

work is needed throughout the school to embed the successful practices fully, although some very useful self-assessment of writing in Year 2 is already helping to raise standards.

Pupils find the good curriculum to be interesting and challenging. They enjoy and appreciate the various clubs, visits and visitors that enrich their learning. The school is increasingly adapting the curriculum to meet the changing needs of individuals and groups. For example, gifted and talented pupils are supported and challenged through good links with specialist staff, national sports programmes and a nearby secondary school. Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures to safeguard and protect pupils are robust. High expectations of behaviour and attendance are backed up by effective monitoring and the judicious use of rewards and, occasionally, sanctions. Pupils regard all of these as fair.

Overall, leadership and management are good and this is the main reason for the school's recent good improvement. In particular, the headteacher provides very effective leadership that:

- continues to seek improvement, such as even better progress in Years 1 and 2
- promotes a very strong and caring ethos through a good curriculum and good guidance and support.

Other school managers and governors provide effective and enthusiastic support. Monitoring and self-evaluation are good but there is room for improvement in two areas:

- lesson observations are too focused on the performance of the teacher and not enough on the quality of pupils' learning
- governors lack a formal mechanism to judge whether the school's aims have been met.

Development planning is effective and the indicators of success are clear and measurable. As a result of all this, the school is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are taught well in Reception and make good progress. Most children enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are typical for their age and some exceed them. They are well prepared for their future learning. The classroom is a good learning environment that is rich in stimulation, such as displays that support learning in literacy and numeracy, and good use of information and communication technology. The outdoor area is used well. During the inspection, for example, groups of children were preparing to 'take-off' into space in their home-made rocket. Areas in the classroom are designated for a wide range of learning activities that are either adult-led or available for the children to choose. Relationships between children and with adults are very good and the children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Fully embed high quality assessment practice across the school.
- Focus lesson observations on the quality of pupils' learning.
- Devise a formal mechanism for the governing body to evaluate the work of the school and judge how well it is meeting its aims.

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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	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	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	2

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?	2

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	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

14 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Huddlesden St Paul's Church of England Primary School, Blackburn with Darwen, BB3 3NH.

I really enjoyed my day in your good school this week. You were all most kind, welcoming, polite and helpful. These are some of the key findings about your school.

What I really liked about your school was:

- the much better standards in your work by the time you leave Year 6
- the good progress you make throughout the school
- the happy atmosphere in the school and the way you support each other
- your impressive behaviour, attendance and attitudes to work that show how much you enjoy school
- your enthusiastic response to all the interesting activities that teachers provide
- the contribution of the school council to the life of the school
- your parents' appreciation of the achievements in your work, the good teaching and the care shown by all the adults
- the good work by your headteacher and senior teachers that makes the school successful.

To make your school even better, I have asked that teachers' assessment of your work is equally good throughout the school. I have also suggested that the school should make sure lessons are consistently good by checking how much you learn during them. Finally, I have also asked the governors to set up a way of judging how well the school is doing. The school council may well be asked to make a contribution to this.

Good luck for the future and best wishes.

Yours sincerely

John Heap

Lead inspector