

Castle Hill St Philip's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106472
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	324408
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Barbara Flitcroft

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	196
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev J Taylor
Headteacher	Mrs Wendy Hilton
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hereford Road Hindley Wigan Lancashire WN2 4DH
Telephone number	01942 255578
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are White British. In November 2008 the school worked with the local authority to create a raising attainment plan. The headteacher was confirmed in her post in November 2008, having previously worked as the deputy headteacher. A new deputy has been appointed from Easter 2009. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school holds the National Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark Award, the Wigan Quality Standard for Foundation Stage, the Eco Schools Green Flag Award and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school where pupils, by the end of Year 6, attain broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily. It provides sound value for money. The school has some notable strengths: the welfare and personal development of children in Early Years Foundation Stage, the promotion of community cohesion and the good progress pupils make in writing across the school. However, staffing disruptions in recent months brought about by prolonged staff absences and some weak teaching have slowed the rate at which pupils learn. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The best teaching excites pupils and promotes active engagement in their learning, but this does not occur in all classes. Pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress with targeted support from teaching assistants and outside agencies. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall but the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent across the school. All pupils have targets for writing but many do not know what they have to do to improve their work because the wording of the targets is too vague. The curriculum is satisfactory. There is an increasing focus on the creative curriculum, which is in the very early stages of development.

Pupils say they enjoy school. Most behave well in lessons; however, pupils acknowledge that behaviour outside lessons could be improved. Many parents are supportive of the school but some are concerned about the behaviour of some pupils. Personal development, including behaviour, is satisfactory.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has a mostly accurate view of its strengths and areas needing improvement and, under the effective leadership of the headteacher, has made a start on improvements but these have not had sufficient time to impact on achievement and standards across the school. The leaders and managers in the recently formed curriculum teams have yet to make their mark on subject developments. Governors have a clear view of their roles and responsibilities, supporting the senior leaders and offering some challenge. The school has satisfactory capacity for improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Children get off to a satisfactory start in Reception as a result of effective links with parents, sound induction procedures and good-quality pastoral care. A typical comment from parents is, 'I have been pleased with my child's progress in these first few months of his school life.' Although indoor and outdoor activities provide exciting ways of learning, the outdoor environment is used rather less frequently and effectively. Leadership and management are satisfactory with some strengths in the good-quality observations of the progress children make. These are used well to plan the next steps in learning. Most children begin Reception with skills broadly in line with those expected in most areas of learning but below in communication, language and literacy development. They make good progress in reading and writing, with satisfactory progress in the other areas, and leave Reception with skills in line with those expected. Children with learning, social or emotional needs also make satisfactory progress because the staff plan well for their individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' behaviour outside lessons so that, at minimum, it matches the acceptable behaviour in class.
- Raise the quality of teaching by increasing the level of challenge set in pupils work and accelerating the rate at which pupils learn in lessons.
- Provide appropriate targets and meaningful marking of pupils work that helps them improve.
- Ensure that leaders and managers at all levels play a full role in the future development of the school.

A small proportion of 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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils join Year 1 with skills that are broadly in line with those typically expected. Although achievement is satisfactory overall, pupils do not progress at a consistent rate throughout the school. The best rates of progress are in Key Stage 1 with a slower pace of progress in Key Stage 2 where most staffing disruptions have occurred. Results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been variable because of this. Unvalidated 2008 results and the work of the current Year 6 show standards are broadly in line with national averages. The school has taken action to improve pupils' achievement in its recent raising attainment plan; one example of the school's success is that standards in writing have improved. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall. However, the school has little evidence to show the progress children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make after focused interventions, some of which are delivered very well, because it does not track their progress sufficiently thoroughly.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. Behaviour in the classroom is acceptable so that it does not interfere with learning and time is not wasted. Most pupils move around the school sensibly and with care for others, but this is not always the case and a few pupils say that they do not feel safe. Members of the school council feel that the school is doing enough to deal with aspects of poor behaviour, such as fighting or bullying. Pupils say they enjoy school, with older pupils citing challenging mathematics and practical science lessons as reasons for their enjoyment. The school's garden provides opportunities for pupils to grow their own vegetables which are then used in the cooking of the school meals. This aspect of the school's work helps reinforce pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles as well as working as part of a community. Extra-curricular activities such as football and dance add to pupils' growing awareness of healthy lifestyles. Through a multicultural week and a partnership with another school, pupils' understanding of what it means to be part of a global community is developing. Progress in literacy and numeracy, a growing use of information and communication technology and satisfactory attendance are helping prepare pupils for their future in the world of work. Although attendance rates are average overall, the poor attendance of a small group of pupils adversely affects their progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. In the best lessons, pupils are fully engaged and their achievement is good. Pupils are given opportunities for collaboration, cooperation and independent work. There are a variety of tasks to enable all pupils to succeed and an industrious buzz of enthusiasm for learning. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and demand high standards of behaviour. For example, in a literacy lesson to inspire writing, one group of Key Stage 1 pupils were excited about taking digital photographs showing characters' emotions while others used computers to design the story setting. In some lessons basic skills are taught through encouragement and interesting, practical hands-on activities such as measuring objects in and around the classroom or 2-D shape walks. As a result of staffing disruptions, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school. In some lessons, learning does not feature at the centre, and marking is not clear enough to help pupils to learn from their mistakes, thus limiting their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The contribution that the curriculum makes to pupils' learning is satisfactory. Newly introduced measures for implementing a creative curriculum are in the process of being trialled by a small number of staff. Curriculum teams have been established but because of staffing disruptions these teams are not yet as effective as they could be in curriculum development. There is a range of art-inspired information and communication technology (ICT) work on display throughout the school, with particularly high-quality work based on the life and work of Charles Rennie Mackintosh. Regular visitors and visits, which include swimming and community activities, have a satisfactory impact on standards, pupils' personal development and their understanding of healthy lifestyles. Although there are some extra-curricular clubs on offer, the current range is limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils say that they feel safe when there are adults around, and that any incidents of bullying are dealt with fairly. Support for pupils who find learning difficult or who have social, emotional or communication needs is mainly effective, although the quality is variable. Staff, including the learning mentor, demonstrate care and empathy when working with pupils who are vulnerable. There are good relationships with supported pupils and their families to help them to understand more about school. All procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current government guidelines. Systems to check pupils' progress are satisfactory. Although teachers know pupils well, the academic guidance given to pupils is not impacting fully on the achievement of all of them. Marking in writing across the school is often helpful, but it is not as strong in other subjects.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher has a clear vision and determination to improve provision in the school; these have been key factors in the recent improvements. She is building good relationships to create a team of staff who are beginning to share the vision for driving improvement. Together with representatives from the local authority a raising attainment plan has been created and is in the early stages of implementation. Due to the relatively short time that systems for tracking and monitoring pupils' progress have been in place, the full impact of these on raising standards has yet to be realised. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion with its strong church links, links with other schools and partnerships with outside agencies. Governors have a realistic picture of the strengths of the school and the improvements it needs to make.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 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

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 eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

Thank you for your friendly welcome during our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed chatting with you and listening to your views. You told us that you enjoy school. It is an exciting time with new staff arriving and your teachers working on new ways to deliver the curriculum.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. This means that it does some things well but there are other areas that need improving. The Reception children settle in well and enjoy exciting activities, especially indoors. Your school helps you to be aware of different people's lives and cultures outside your local community. You are beginning to make good progress in writing. The following are the areas that your school needs to work on next.

- Some of you do not behave well enough when you are not in lessons. I have asked your teachers to make sure that you behave well outside the classrooms too.
- I have asked teachers to expect more of you so you make good progress in all your lessons.
- I want you all to know exactly what you can do to improve your work. I have asked your teachers to check that their marking and the targets they set you are easy to understand and help you to learn from your mistakes.
- Lastly, I have asked everyone who has responsibilities to make sure they do their best to improve your school. You must play your part in being in school on time every day and trying your very best in lessons and other school activities.