

St Hilda's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105351
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	336480
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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 of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Alan Armitage
Headteacher	Mrs Adele Gaunt
Date of previous school inspection	11 January 2007
School address	Whittaker Lane Prestwich Manchester M25 1HA
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent two thirds of their time looking at learning, visited ten lessons, observed seven teachers and held meeting with governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed other aspects of the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed the 49 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work and looked in detail at the following:

- the extent to which pupils' attainment is rising and their progress accelerating
- pupils' attainment in mathematics
- how well teaching meets the needs and promotes the learning of different groups of pupils
- pupils' attendance and punctuality and how these and other factors influence their future economic well-being
- the progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the extent to which the work of leaders and managers is improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

St Hilda's Church of England Primary is a small school. Most pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is a little above average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The number of pupils who start or leave the school other than at the normal age of entry is relatively high. A small number of children are in the care of the local authority. The school makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a mixed Reception and Year 1 class. There are three other mixed-age classes. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Standard and the Activemark award. A privately managed out-of-school club is available to pupils after school each day and at holiday times. This was inspected in 2009 and the report is available on the Ofsted website. Before the current headteacher took up the post permanently in January 2009 the school had several acting headteachers in a relatively short space of time.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the outcomes for pupils, particularly their attainment and progress.

Since the last inspection the school has experienced substantial disruption to staffing which has left a legacy of low attainment. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher the root causes of the low attainment are being addressed and there are clear signs of improvement. However, while the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, pupils' attainment is not yet improving strongly enough and learning and progress are neither good nor improving quickly. This is particularly evident in mathematics where pupils' ability to manipulate numbers and solve mathematical problems is weak. Many pupils read competently but make basic mistakes in their writing.

Lessons that contain practical tasks are popular with pupils because they allow them to think for themselves. Not all lessons include such interesting tasks and those that do often leave too little time for pupils to complete them successfully and to their own satisfaction. Teachers' assess pupils' work regularly but the information gained is not always used carefully enough to ensure the work for pupils of different abilities provides the right amount of challenge. The curriculum is quite ordinary and provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in different subjects

Most pupils are friendly and polite but many have a relatively short attention span, particularly when lessons fail to engage them fully and do not stimulate sufficient interest. Although there has been some improvement of late, levels of attendance are low and some pupils do not attend as often as they could or make enough effort to arrive at school on time.

For the first time in a while the school has settled leadership and well-constructed development plans which focus clearly on the raising of attainment. Senior staff and the governing body have an accurate understanding of what the school is doing successfully and where improvements are most needed. Evaluations of the school's performance are well informed but too broad and lack the detail that is now needed to accelerate the pace of improvement further. Development has been aided by the introduction of new and improved management systems, such as more effective procedures for tracking

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pupils' progress. These are building towards full effectiveness but currently do not provide easy access to information about how well different groups of pupils are progressing. When all factors are taken into account the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress, improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that throughout all lessons pupils are engaged in activities they find interesting and stimulating
 - giving pupils sufficient time to think for themselves and complete fully the tasks they have been set
 - making full use of assessment to ensure that the work set provides pupils of all abilities with the correct amount of challenge.
- Increase pupils' enjoyment of learning and improve their basic skills by:
 - improving the quality of the curriculum
 - providing better opportunities for pupils to use literacy and numeracy in other subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - refining procedures for evaluating the school's work so that they provide the fine detail needed to accelerate the pace of improvement
 - developing tracking systems which provide a clear picture of how well different groups of pupils are achieving.
- Work with parents and carers to improve attendance and punctuality.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

The enjoyment pupils get from learning varies because they find some lessons much more interesting than others. They particularly like lessons which involve decision making and investigation. When given such tasks they apply themselves well and try hard to meet the objectives they have been set. When lessons do not have such a practical base many pupils quickly become restless and lose concentration. The quality of their work suffers and they do not achieve all that they could.

Pupils' attainment varies between different subjects and tends to be better in English than in mathematics, although pupils' writing often lacks flair and accuracy. Many pupils have poor calculation skills and, while their understanding of numbers and recall of important mathematical facts is improving, they lack confidence when faced with anything but the most basic of problems. It is often pupils of broadly average ability who make the least progress and the number of pupils who achieve the expected level in the national tests is often low, particularly in mathematics and science. From this low starting point the school is starting to build a stronger base for pupils' learning but

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improvement is at an early stage and higher attainment and fast enough progress have still to be secured. Because they receive regular and often quite intensive support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their individual targets. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are included fully and maintain a similar rate of progress to other pupils, which at times could be better. Pupils who experience all of their primary education at the school tend to attain better than those who join part-way through, but there is still room for improvement.

Pupils feel safe and secure in school and are confident to approach adults if they have any problems. Some express a few concerns about bullying but appreciate that staff quickly deal with any incidents that occur. Pupils have a sound understanding of the importance of regular exercise and a healthy diet but would like more opportunities to be physically active, particularly after school. Older pupils in particular readily take on responsibilities around school and take pride in the improvements they have contributed to through the school council. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is generally satisfactory but calling out and inattentiveness adversely affect the pace of some lessons. The poor attendance and lack of punctuality of a significant minority of pupils adversely affect the continuity of their learning. When these issues are combined with weaknesses in basic skills pupils' preparation for future learning and life is inadequate. While most pupils reflect carefully on important issues that affect their lives, some show immaturity in their dealings with others.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<p>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</p> <p>Taking into account: Pupils' attendance¹</p>	<p>4</p> <hr/> <p>4</p>
<p>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</p>	<p>3</p>

How effective is the provision?

While teachers introduce lessons thoroughly, on occasions they spend too long talking to pupils or going over things from previous lessons that pupils already know and can do. This limits the time available for pupils to do things for themselves and to secure what they have been taught. Teachers' use of assessment to match work to pupils' needs is improving, but at times the tasks they set are very similar for all pupils and lack challenge for some. The work given to middle-attaining pupils in particular does not always move them forward quickly enough. Teaching assistants are deployed satisfactorily, although some provide better support for pupils during class discussions than others. Marking is satisfactory but the quality of guidance it provides for pupils varies between teachers and subjects. The teaching some pupils receive in small groups to boost their learning is satisfactory but does not always give them the opportunity to decide for themselves when they need help.

While the curriculum ensures that pupils are taught all the required subjects and it promotes their personal development satisfactorily, it is rather mundane. Subjects are occasionally linked together productively, such as when pupils in Years 3 and 4 learn about the Tudors through a combination of history and drama, but this is uncommon. Too many lessons, particularly in mathematics and science, provide insufficient scope for pupils to show independence while they are learning and there are only limited opportunities for pupils to apply key skills, such as those of literacy and numeracy, across different subjects. Extensions of the curriculum in lessons and after school are satisfactory but pupils would welcome a wider choice of extra-curricular activities and additional opportunities to meet visitors and to make educational visits.

The school keeps a careful watch over pupils who may be vulnerable, including those in the care of the local authority, and provides sensitive support to those who experience difficulties in their lives. Through well-established links with outside agencies the school ensures that additional help is available to pupils as and when they need it. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is generally organised effectively and provides satisfactory support for their learning and well-being. Improved procedures for promoting good attendance and punctuality were instigated at the start of the new school year and are beginning to show positive results. However, attendance is still too low and some parents and carers have yet to recognise the adverse effects that this and poor punctuality have on their children's future well-being.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	3
	3
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	3
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	3

How effective are leadership and management?

In the relatively short time since her appointment the headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has moved the school forward on the path to increased effectiveness. Support from the local authority and Greater Manchester Challenge, a government initiative to improve educational outcomes, has been utilised well and among senior staff and the governing body there is a shared determination to generate higher attainment and a faster pace of learning for pupils. Effective procedures for tracking individual pupils' progress have been instigated and regular meetings are held in which teachers account for the progress their pupils are making. Teachers' understanding of how to use all the information that is available to them to improve their practice and raise pupils' attainment is developing but is not completely secure. Leaders ensure that all pupils are fully included in all the school offers and none are discriminated against. However, provision does not yet guarantee that all pupils can achieve to the best of their abilities and systems to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils are time-consuming. The school makes a positive contribution to local community cohesion, particularly through its links with the local church, but its contribution outside the local area is limited and recognised as an area for development. Safeguarding procedures are up to date and meet requirements. These are checked and reviewed regularly by senior staff and increasingly by governors. The newly constituted governing body has an accurate picture of the school, including the areas most in need of improvement. Using this as a springboard governors are quickly increasing the role they play in determining the school's strategic direction.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	3
	3
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	3
<p>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</p>	3
<p>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</p>	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter Reception with skills and abilities that are often at levels lower than those typically expected for their age, particularly in communication and language. They make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and transfer to Year 1 with attainment that is below age-related expectations. However, this is beginning to change. Improved provision and better teaching are accelerating children's progress and while some are still likely to fall short of the targets for their age at the end of Reception, the number meeting expectations is increasing. Staff work effectively as a team and promote children's welfare well. They provide purposeful activities both indoors and out which children enjoy and readily engage in. These make full use of the new facilities and strike an effective balance between adult-led activities and others that children choose for themselves. On occasions staff miss opportunities to extend learning further while children are involved in self-chosen activities. Children are encouraged to make choices and to share and they become increasingly confident in their work and play. Teaching is satisfactory, overall, and often has good features. Children are taught about sounds and letters in a lively and constructive way and many have started to link this to words they are familiar with. When asked for a word which has the 'ch' sound a child answered 'church' and said it was special because it had the sound both at the beginning and the end. Children's progress is assessed regularly and detailed records are kept to inform planning and illustrate development. Leaders and managers are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in provision and are keen to implement further changes to ensure the best possible outcomes for children. Positive relationships are maintained with parents and carers. Meetings and the completion of a book, *Starting School*, ensure that children make a smooth start to school and parents and carers are able to contribute to their children's progress files when they wish to do so.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased that their children enjoy school and are happy with the quality of education they are receiving. Some parents and carers find the school very supportive and easy to communicate with while others would like it to have stronger links with them. Inspectors judge that the arrangements for communication with parents and carers are satisfactory. Although they are very confident their children are safe at school, a small number of parents and carers have concerns about bullying and the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. During discussions with inspectors pupils agreed that there is some rough behaviour at times but that teachers quickly sort matters out. The behaviour seen during the inspection was satisfactory.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hilda's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 105 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	47	22	45	3	6	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	73	13	27	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	39	26	53	2	4	2	4
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	41	23	47	2	4	4	8
The teaching is good at this school	27	55	18	37	3	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	23	47	20	41	3	6	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	45	21	43	3	6	2	4
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	7	14	29	59	3	6	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	43	22	45	1	2	2	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	43	21	43	5	10	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	41	22	45	6	12	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	22	45	19	39	3	6	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	53	18	37	2	4	2	4

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



11 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hilda's Church of England Primary School, Manchester, M25 1HA

Thank you very much for the very friendly welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and chatted to us which made us feel comfortable and welcomed. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school. It was good to hear that most of you are happy at school and feel safe and looked after. This is important to the staff and we know they will be pleased. Quite a lot of the pupils who filled in the questionnaire indicated that they did not think behaviour in school was good enough. To some extent we agree. While behaviour is satisfactory for most of the time, in some lessons it could be better. We noticed that you behave and learn best when you are doing and finding out things for yourselves and have pointed this out to your teachers. They will be providing more of the 'think and do' type of activities that you like, but when they do you will all need to behave well, concentrate hard all of the time and complete all tasks to the best of your abilities.

Although the school is steadily getting better, many of you do not learn enough or make as much progress as you should, particularly in mathematics and writing. For this reason we have given the school a 'notice to improve' and other inspectors will visit to check how well it is doing. As well as improving lessons we have asked the school to give you more opportunities to use literacy and numeracy in different subjects. You can help by always writing to the best of your ability and calculating carefully whatever lesson you are doing it in. We looked at the attendance figures and noticed there is quite a lot of absence. It is very important that you attend school whenever you can and arrive on time. This will help you to learn and prepare you for the future. We also made a few other suggestions to help the school get even better which teachers and governors will be looking into. Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Mr Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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