

St William of York RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105226
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377205
Inspection dates	23–24 May 2012
Lead inspector	Steven Hill

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 of pupils on the school roll	260
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joan Gettins
Headteacher	Gerardine Babb
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2005
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Introduction

Inspection team

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Sheila Loughlin
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty three lessons or parts of lessons were observed, taught by 13 different members of staff. Meetings were held with staff, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a variety of documentation, particularly that related to safeguarding and pupils' progress. Examples of pupils' work were scrutinised, on displays and in their books. Questionnaires were analysed from staff, pupils and from 73 parents and carers.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school in an urban location. About half the pupils are of White British heritage with the rest coming from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds; about half of these families have either Indian or Pakistani heritages. A high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are frequently new arrivals at school into different age groups, and these pupils have often arrived from abroad, sometimes with little experience of speaking English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. While the proportion of disabled pupils and of those who have special educational needs is above average, the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs or are supported at school action plus is below average.

The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

Older children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught full time in a Reception class (known to parents as Foundation Stage 2). Younger children are taught half time in a separate Nursery class (known as Foundation Stage 1).

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not outstanding because teaching, while good, is not of sufficiently high quality to make progress outstanding, and assessments are not completely reliable. It is a remarkably cohesive multicultural community where boys and girls from a wide range of backgrounds work and play together extremely well.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Pupils who sometimes struggle with academic work do particularly well, so virtually all pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Almost all teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Lessons are extremely orderly and well managed, with a good pace, and excellent relationships between staff and pupils. Teachers generally match tasks accurately to pupils' different needs, so progress is good. Occasionally, the work is not pitched at the correct level, being either too easy or too hard for some, or the pace is a little too fast for everyone to cope, or a little too slow to sustain everyone's interest. Such situations seldom last long, because teachers monitor pupils' progress and swiftly intervene to get learning back on track.
- Pupils' conduct is outstanding and they feel extremely safe in school. Their excellent relationships mean that they collaborate very effectively, regardless of background. Pupils are unfailingly polite and friendly, very respectful of others' views and cultures, and supportive of each other. They greatly enjoy learning, work hard and concentrate extremely well in class.
- The clear leadership of the headteacher and her deputy result in good teaching and performance across the school, strong teamwork and a shared educational direction. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent because of this consistent approach. There is an excellent focus on tracking pupils' progress but, as leaders have identified, inconsistencies in teachers' assessments detract from its value.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the frequent assessments made of pupils' attainment are more reliable by:
 - ensuring staff regularly share examples of their assessments and work together to make them more consistent
 - having senior staff check overall assessments each half term to make sure results are coherent and investigate any apparent anomalies.
- Improve teaching and progress, particularly by:
 - ensuring that activities in lessons are always matched to different pupils' needs
 - ensuring that the pace of lessons is brisk enough to hold everyone's interest, without those pupils who find academic work difficult being left behind.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage with development levels, while varying between individuals and from year to year, are broadly well below those of most children of their age. They make good progress although their attainment at the end of Reception is below average. Continuing good progress at Key Stage 1 leads to generally average attainment by the end of Year 2, including in reading, although relatively few pupils reach the higher Level 3. By the end of Year 6, good progress means overall attainment is above average. Results of 2011 national tests indicated virtually all pupils reached the expected Level 4 and many exceeded this in English and mathematics. Attainment varies with the different make-up of cohorts, including the influx of newcomers, and current attainment in Year 6 is closer to average because this group began Key Stage 2 with very low attainment. Nevertheless, all have made good progress from their starting points. Attainment in reading is above average in most years although, for the current Year 6, the most recent assessments show their reading standards to be average.

Pupils achieve well in lessons because of good teaching and their own positive attitudes to learning. Parents and carers rightly agree that their children's achievement is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage do particularly well in developing their personal and social skills. They settle happily and learn from a good mix of child-chosen and adult-directed activities. Skilled interventions by adults in children's play sensibly focus on developing their language skills in a meaningful context. This is a major factor in helping those who are new to learning English to speak the language confidently and fluently and so learn effectively in all areas of learning.

Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress in their basic literacy and numeracy skills in carefully structured sessions based on commercial schemes. Occasionally, progress slows when the pace or level of challenge do not meet the needs of all pupils in the group. In literacy, lessons are successfully taught about letters and their sounds which enhances their early reading and writing skills. In a lesson with pupils in Year 1, good progress was made in understanding how to write numbers up to 1000 because of the clear organisation and carefully structured tasks. Pupils in Year 5 made good progress in their understanding of persuasive argument when they discussed some complex moral issues together in pairs.

Boys and girls from different groups all achieve equally well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because of a tight match of tasks to their needs. Pupils new to learning English do well because they are given specific help to develop their skills. By the time they leave, their achievement matches that of their classmates. The attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very much closer to that of other pupils than is the case nationally.

Quality of teaching

Teachers have very high expectations of work and behaviour, and these are met through excellent relationships with pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used effectively to illustrate and clarify explanations, and to show pupils just what is required. Frequent discussions in pairs help pupils to sort out their ideas and extend their speaking and listening skills. An excellent example of this was observed when Year 6 pupils greatly extended their understanding of character and of complex moral issues, as they prepared to write a formal letter based on a Gene Kemp novel. Reading is taught well, with a good emphasis on phonics (how the sounds in words relate to how they are written). Good use is made of information and communication technology to enhance progress, as when pupils in Year 4 designed pictures in the style of Mondrian on laptop computers. A good pace to lessons usually maintains pupils' enthusiasm. Even on odd occasions when the pace slows, or some pupils find that a rapid pace has left them puzzled, their respect for their teachers sustains their good behaviour. Parents and carers are rightly positive about the quality of teaching and learning in the school.

Teachers regularly modify work to enable those pupils who might otherwise struggle to cope, as well as to challenge higher-ability pupils. This is particularly valuable in enhancing the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. These pupils also benefit from good support and challenge provided by teaching assistants. When teaching is less effective, tasks are initially too easy or too difficult for a few pupils. Teachers usually rectify this promptly because they monitor ongoing progress regularly in lessons and are generally able to provide support to any who are confused, or to increase challenge for the more-able pupils to extend their learning. Teachers assess pupils regularly, and know their needs well, although there is inconsistency in assessments and the use of this information to track progress at the end of each half term. The marking of pupils' work is of good quality, identifying success and showing them how to improve, although it seldom refers to pupils' individual targets. A major strength is the established use of self-evaluation, which consolidates pupils' understanding, and of peer marking.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and with staff, which underpin the high quality of their behaviour in class and around school. Boys and girls from different backgrounds work together effectively in the classroom and play together happily outdoors. They are keen to succeed and take a great pride in their work. They try very hard in lessons and concentrate extremely well, listening attentively to adults and to each other and contributing their own ideas thoughtfully. These positive attitudes strongly support their good achievement. Pupils understand different forms of bullying and are confident that, if there are problems, then adults will sort them out. Although they say that occasionally pupils will have arguments, they agree that serious misbehaviour or bullying are extremely rare, and a group of Year 6 pupils struggled to think of any examples. They say excellent behaviour is typical in their school. Pupils take an active role in promoting positive attitudes

around the school, for example through their roles as buddies or mentors. They contribute their ideas effectively through the school council and are certain their views are valued and make a difference. A strength throughout the school is the warm welcome given to the many newcomers. Pupils offer help with learning to speak English as well as learning school routines.

Pupils feel very safe in school. They understand the importance of looking after themselves and have learnt a lot about how to keep themselves safe, both through following rules in school and also through what they have been taught about keeping safe in life. For example, they are very aware of the dangers of incorrect use of the internet, including cyber-bullying. Attendance is consistently above average and is rising. Parents and carers strongly agree that their children behave well and are safe in school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and her colleagues have a strong shared vision which they implement effectively. The focus is firmly on ensuring all pupils make good progress and also on very successfully developing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. A good system of self-evaluation, together with this shared educational direction, show the school is well-placed to improve in future. Although there are occasional, minor shortcomings in teaching, the regular monitoring of lessons provides teachers with clear feedback on their performance and helps them improve their practice. Good professional development helps colleagues in refining their teaching.

Monitoring of performance is effective and is based on a sophisticated system to track pupils' achievement. Senior staff use information successfully to monitor the progress of individuals and groups. Action is then taken to identify school priorities as well as support any who are not doing as well as they should. However, over the past two years, assessment information has presented a confusing picture in the short term, because of inaccuracies caused by inconsistency in the way different teachers interpret pupils' performance. A good start has been made on ensuring more consistency between teachers in their assessments, but the picture still presents some anomalies which the school plans to address, through rigorous, regular analysis.

The broad, balanced curriculum meets pupils' needs well. There is a successful focus on the basic skills of English and mathematics, but this is enhanced by a wide range of interesting activities in other subjects. Pupils' skills are promoted imaginatively across the curriculum, particularly through their writing in subjects such as history, geography and science. Some high quality art and design and technology work reflects the breadth of experiences. The consistent reinforcement of social and moral values, many opportunities to reflect on important issues and the study of a wide range of cultures strongly support their positive values and excellent behaviour and relationships.

The governing body has a good understanding of the school's performance and is well-able to hold it to account. They combine with leaders to promote equality of opportunity and successfully eliminate discrimination. Improved tracking is closing gaps and a greater proportion of more-able pupils reach the high levels by the end of Year 6. Governors and staff ensure that safeguarding meets requirements, including a strong concentration on learning about keeping safe in the curriculum, which contributes to pupils' great feeling of enjoyment and security in school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



25 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St William of York RC Primary School, Bolton, BL3 3DE

Thank you for all your help and your warm welcome when we inspected your school. You told us that you go to a good school, and you are right. We were impressed by your excellent behaviour, your politeness and friendliness, and your hard work. We were particularly pleased to see how well you all get along together, whether playing with your friends outside, or sharing equipment and discussing your ideas in class. You are growing up into sensible, caring and thoughtful young people that your school, parents and carers can be proud of.

St William's gives you a good education. You are making good progress because your teachers are good at helping you to learn. They try hard to make sure everyone gets work that is just right for them, and usually succeed. Occasionally, the tasks are a bit hard for some pupils, or a little too easy. We have agreed with the staff that they are going to work to see that this happens even less in future. You get lots of interesting things to do that make school enjoyable. You are really good at marking your own and each other's work, and this helps you understand your learning better.

The adults keep a careful eye on how everyone is getting on, so they can give extra help to anyone who needs this. They have a very good system to record how well everyone has done, but occasionally the results are not as accurate as they should be. We have agreed with your headteacher that the teachers will work together over the next year, to check that each other's assessments are accurate.

The adults are very keen to keep on improving the school, and you can help by keeping up your hard work, good attendance and excellent behaviour, and always telling adults if something is too easy or too hard for you.

We hope you carry on enjoying life at St William's.

Yours sincerely

Steven Hill
Lead inspector

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