

St Aidan and St Oswald's RC School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105721
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	377288
Inspection dates	27–28 June 2012
Lead inspector	Shirley Herring

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	394
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stephen Doyle
Headteacher	Mr Damian Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
School address	Roman Road Royton Oldham OL2 5PQ
Telephone number	0161 6522558
Fax number	0161 6338671
Email address	info@ssaidanoswald.oldham.sch.uk



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



© Crown copyright 2012

Introduction

Inspection team

Shirley Herring
Robert Pye
Louise Murphy

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 14 teachers in 27 lessons, observed support staff working with pupils, listened to pupils read and held meetings with groups of pupils, staff, the school's improvement partner and members of the governing body. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, documentation regarding the safeguarding of pupils, assessments and the tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils and the school development plan. They scrutinised 86 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from a White British background although the number of pupils from different minority ethnic groups has increased since the last inspection, the largest group being pupils of Bangladeshi heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average but increasing. The proportion of pupils supported at School Action Plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. The deputy headteacher has been in post 18 months.

The school's awards include The Investors in People Gold Award and the Achievement for All Quality Mark. The school meets current floor standards for English and mathematics, which are minimum standards expected by the government. There is independent pre-school provision and an independent breakfast-club on site which are inspected separately. The latest report on this provision is available on the Ofsted website.

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	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It makes strong provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and so pupils gain a good understanding of the needs of others. The school is not yet outstanding because there is not enough teaching that is outstanding to raise attainment even further.
- Pupils make good progress from starting points that are below what could be expected for their age. In Year 6, attainment is average which represents good achievement. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage achieve well; learning is good in those activities led by an adult but is less effective in those activities children choose for themselves. Pupils with a disability or with special educational needs achieve well because of the good level of support they receive. Pupils at an early stage of speaking English are well supported and make good progress.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are interesting and pupils respond well to teachers’ high expectations. Most lessons move at a fast pace and hold pupils’ attention. Occasionally, initial mathematics activities for the whole class go on too long and some pupils become restless. Teachers set challenging targets but pupils are not always familiar with how they can be achieved.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved and cooperate well with each other in lessons and this enhances their learning. They have an exceptional awareness of how to assess risks and keep safe.
- The structured approach to managing the performance of teachers has been effective in improving teaching and raising attainment. The headteacher and other leaders work closely together to monitor and evaluate the work of the school and bring about improvements. A slight dip in attainment in 2011 has been fully addressed and any gaps in learning are closing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To raise attainment further, increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that independent activities in the Reception classes are purposeful and have a clear focus on learning
 - moving on more quickly in mathematics lessons from initial activities for the whole class to independent tasks
 - making pupils well aware of their targets so that they are helpful and supportive to pupils in improving their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are confident that their children make good progress in school, which is the judgement of the inspectors. Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are below what could be expected for their age. They make good progress although some children are not yet working at the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils continue to make good progress through school, and attainment is average by the time they leave Year 6. There was a fall in attainment in 2011 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The school has convincing evidence that this was related to the unusually large number of pupils who had joined the school other than at the usual age the previous year. For example, approximately a third of the Year 2 pupils had joined the school in Year 1, and many of these had had no previous school experience. The school's careful tracking of pupils' progress shows that the vast majority of pupils in that year, including those who had joined the school after the usual time, had made at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. Pupils currently in school are making good progress and achieving well. The school has acted swiftly and effectively in the current year to close the gap in expected attainment for pupils now in Year 3 and they are now working securely at the appropriate level for their age. Pupils in Year 6 are working at least at the level expected for their age, with an above average proportion exceeding this in both English and mathematics. Standards in reading are broadly average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good progress and achieve well.

Learning is most effective when lessons are interesting and pupils are actively involved. This was seen in an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 2 when pupils worked successfully together to find out how many different combinations there were for two children to sit on five seats. More-able pupils rose to the challenge of using the information to try to predict the possibilities for much higher numbers. Learning slows slightly in those parts of some mathematics lessons when pupils become restless as they have been working a little too long as a whole class before getting on with their independent work.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers express the view that their children are taught well and this is endorsed by inspection findings. Lessons are generally interesting and well planned and engage

pupils' attention. This was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 3 when pupils developed a good understanding of the characters in the story of Little Red Riding Hood as they asked questions of fellow pupils who answered confidently as the wolf, the woodcutter or Red Riding Hood. Lessons generally move at a fast pace and this sustains pupils' interest.

Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan work for different groups. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and learn well in class and in small groups. Pupils at an early stage of learning receive good support, including bilingual support, and are fully included in lessons and make good progress. The skills of the teaching assistants are well deployed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning.

Teachers mark work carefully and give pupils clear suggestions on how they can improve, particularly in writing. Teachers set challenging individual targets for the longer term, but pupils are not always sufficiently familiar with their own target or how they can achieve the next level.

Teaching is good in the Reception classes and children make good progress. It is most effective in those focused activities led by an adult for the whole class or in small groups. This was seen in a measuring activity to find how many straws matched the length of various objects. The teacher demonstrated that the straws should be touching each other to be fair and this helped to improve their skills. However, those activities children choose for themselves sometimes lack a clear purpose and are not sufficiently focused on extending their learning.

Teachers plan good opportunities to link subjects together and develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills across the curriculum. This has increased enjoyment for pupils and helped to improve standards.

Teachers provide an exceptional range of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils cooperate very well with partners to discuss ideas or to solve problems. They learn about different cultures through planned visits to a cathedral and to the Islamic centre, and are encouraged to aim high as they listen to a wide range of speakers in 'Aspiration Week'.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils, parents and carers are clear in their view that behaviour is good and this is endorsed by inspectors' observations and by reference to the school's behaviour records. Pupils are polite, friendly and well behaved in lessons and at playtimes. They cooperate well with each other in class and this makes a good contribution to their learning. This was seen in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils worked together in teams to solve clues to find out who had stolen the 'Beckham medals'. Pupils are confident that occasional instances of bullying of any kind are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils accept responsibility readily and are certain that their views are taken into account. One group of pupils in Year 5 recently conducted their own Ofsted style inspection, and their findings included recommendations of how playtimes could be improved and also a suggestion that even 'toy-fighting' by younger children should be discouraged. They have a very mature understanding of how to keep safe through planned activities in school, for example on e-safety, healthy diet and the dangers of smoking, drugs and alcohol. Attendance is in line with the average of all primary schools and is improving steadily.

Leadership and management

Parents and carers are of the view that the school is led and managed well. The headteacher and senior leaders have a strong commitment to professional development and all staff, including support staff, are fully included in training in school. Teaching is effectively monitored through lesson observations and through regular scrutiny of pupils' books. Any areas identified for improvement are quickly tackled. This has led to improvements in teaching and helped to raise attainment. The school has developed good links with other schools to share expertise and it leads initiatives on assessment as a lead assessment school. This expertise has been used effectively in school to analyse results in detail and identify and address any underachievement by groups or individuals at an early stage. The emphasis on pupils using and applying mathematical skills in solving problems has improved pupils' basic skills and resulted in a good improvement in the proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. In line with its high quality pastoral care and commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and reducing discrimination, the school adapted well to the sudden increase in pupils from a range of different backgrounds and ensured that their needs were quickly met. Consequently all pupils are fully included and there is now little identifiable difference between the progress of different groups.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides well for the needs of different pupils. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school has extensive links with other schools at home and abroad, helping to promote peace and understanding and encourage awareness of the needs of others. The use of 'statements to live by' helps pupils to make informed choices and take responsibility. Members of the governing body are a regular presence in school and provide good support and challenge for the headteacher. They are well aware of their responsibilities for safeguarding pupils and staff and all policies and procedures are securely in place.

The school's self-evaluation is accurate and provides a good platform for future improvements. There has been a good increase in the proportion of pupils now working beyond the level expected for their age, which was an area for improvement identified at the last inspection. This indicates that the school has a good capacity to improve.

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.



29 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Aidan and St Oswald's RC School, Oldham, OL2 5PQ

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in groups and found your views very useful. We were very interested to read the 'Ofsted Report' produced by Year 5, which you might want to compare it with our report. You are polite, considerate and well behaved and work very well together in class. Well done!

Just like you and your parents and carers, we think that St Aidan and St Oswald's is a good school. Lessons are interesting and there is always someone around if you need any help. I was sorry I had to leave the Year 6 lesson before you solved the problem of who had stolen the Beckham jewels. Fortunately, your teacher was kind enough to tell me the name of the culprit later. You make good progress and you reach the standard expected for your age by the time you leave school and many of you exceed this.

One of the special things about your school is how you learn about children from different backgrounds in different schools, not only in Oldham but in other countries. You are learning to aim high through 'Aspiration Week' and this is an excellent lesson for the future.

It is part of my job to suggest ways that even a good school could improve. I have asked the school to check that:

- activities that children in the Reception class choose for themselves help them to learn
- you know your targets well and use them to help you to improve your work
- you do not have to spend too long at the start of mathematics lessons on activities for the whole class before you get on with the work for your group.

I hope that after learning so much about the original Olympics, you enjoy watching or hearing about the London Olympics in the summer.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.