

St Wilfrid's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105496
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308869
Inspection date	29 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Pinner
Headteacher	Mrs Rycroft
Date of previous school inspection	6 July 1998
School address	Mabel Street Newton Heath Manchester Lancashire M40 1GB
Telephone number	0161 6811385
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the contribution of the school's assessment, tracking, and intervention systems to pupils' achievement
- the quality of teaching and learning
- measures taken to raise attendance.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspector agreed with the school's own judgements on standards and achievement; pupils' personal development and well-being; the curriculum; the care, guidance and support provided for pupils; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; and leadership and management.

Description of the school

St Wilfrid's is a school of average size, serving an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The number of pupils who join and leave the school at other than the normal times is above average. Almost all pupils are White British with a small number from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is well above average and the overall proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very high. There are more boys than girls on roll: in several year groups the imbalance is marked. The school has received recognition for its work in a wide range of areas. In 2005 it gained the bronze healthy schools award, the silver inclusion standard, and the basic skills quality mark for excellence followed in 2006. In 2007 awards as a global school, an eco school, and an international school were added to the arts mark. The headteacher's outstanding leadership was recognised in the 2007 national teaching awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Wilfrid's provides its pupils with an outstanding education. A vibrant environment combines with the energy and enthusiasm of staff and pupils alike to create a community where learning is challenging and enjoyable and all achieve highly. The strong sense of common purpose is captured in the school's motto, 'Working together as one'. Standards are rising and achievement is improving. Children join the Nursery with skills that are poorly developed when compared with those typical for their age group. The 2007 national test results show that they make outstanding progress to reach average standards in the core subjects by the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities reach standards that are above those of similar pupils nationally. This reflects the school's strong commitment to ensuring that every child achieves their best in all aspects of their education.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are excellent. A culture of mutual respect permeates the school, helping pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour and attitudes are outstanding. The school's clear behaviour management system helps pupils to consider the consequences of ill-considered actions: they appreciate this thoughtful approach. Pupils are polite, diligent and take great pride in their work, which is very well presented. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that there is always someone to turn to if they are troubled. However, attendance is below average. The school works hard to improve this, tailoring approaches to help families as effectively as possible. Well-targeted support is successful in ensuring that pupils' progress is sustained despite absences.

Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, for instance as playground pals and school councillors. The high profile school council has a termly focus for its work. It is currently contributing to the school's self-evaluation and plans to develop the school's website next term. It has been influential in decisions about, for instance, the attractive library facilities and improving the football pitches. Pupils understand what contributes to a safe, healthy lifestyle and appreciate the choice of healthy food options at break and lunchtime. The good opportunities pupils have to practise their skills in information and communication technology, work together in pairs and groups, and contribute to decisions about their own learning, prepare them very well for the next stage of their education.

Coherent and well-considered strategies are in place to ensure that provision matches the needs of every pupil. A thorough and highly effective system for setting challenging targets and tracking pupils' progress towards these is central to the school's success. Pupils experiencing difficulties are identified quickly and highly effective support, frequently from well trained teaching assistants, is put in place. Staff are skilled in recognising pupils with significant barriers to learning. No time is lost in ensuring appropriate measures are taken to meet their needs, whether these are difficulties with learning or social and emotional issues. The school works very productively with a very wide range of agencies to access expert support for pupils and their families. As a consequence, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same outstanding progress as other pupils. Links with local secondary schools are strengthening, resulting in good arrangements for transition. The excellent care, guidance and support for pupils are major factors in their outstanding achievement. Comments such as 'a wonderful school' and 'the school is always there to help' are typical of the very positive responses from parents who returned the inspection questionnaire. Systems for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their health and safety meet government requirements.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Classrooms are vivid with displays that celebrate and stimulate pupils' work. Very good relationships between staff and pupils characterise lessons. Teachers have high expectations both of pupils' work and their behaviour. Lessons are thoroughly planned in manageable sections that sustain pupils' interest. Teachers are adept at using assessment information to plan activities well matched to pupils' individual needs. Pupils enjoy learning because they know the purpose of lessons. For instance, Year 5 pupils understood why it is important to write clear instructions when they tried using some that were confusing. No opportunities are lost to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Questioning is well structured to build pupils' understanding: they are given time to consider their answers and respond in complete sentences. Highly effective classroom management ensures that no time is wasted and learning moves at a brisk pace. Thorough marking helps pupils know how to improve.

The outstanding curriculum provides pupils with exciting and motivating experiences designed to broaden their horizons and raise their aspirations. Learning is structured to enable pupils both to develop core skills and follow engaging topics that link a number of subjects. Pupils are enthusiastic about the themed super-learning weeks, enjoying the range of visitors and opportunities for practical activities. They like learning French. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, who form the upper school, are consulted about the themes around which their learning is structured. Curriculum planning based on the chosen area, currently fairgrounds, incorporates the skills and competencies that provide a firm foundation for current and future learning. Good links with local high schools extend the opportunities for pupils who are gifted and talented.

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. Her clear vision, thorough analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development, astute planning and determination are pivotal to the significant improvements made since the previous inspection. These encompass all areas of the school's provision and provide deep foundations for the school's continued success. The headteacher is very well supported by a talented and knowledgeable senior team, as well as staff whose complementary strengths and collaborative approach serve pupils extremely well. Together, staff seek continuous improvement for pupils, reflecting carefully on the impact of innovations on pupils' learning and personal development. Governance is good: governors are committed and well-informed. Resources are very effectively deployed: the school gives outstanding value for money. It has outstanding capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

This is outstanding. Children make exceptional progress in all areas of learning, enjoying their time in school and quickly growing in confidence. An enthusiastic and highly skilled team of staff create an environment which is warm and caring but also challenging. Children experience a broad range of well-structured activities both inside and outside the classroom, which fosters their development towards the nationally agreed early learning goals. Assessment is continuous, systematic and very effective. This information is used to excellent effect to pinpoint children whose early learning needs additional support. Appropriate strategies are employed and specialist help accessed if required. Efficient routines are established and these help promote the good behaviour in evidence. Staff work very successfully to engage parents with their child's learning; for example, parents are encouraged to help their child with a short activity at the beginning of each day. The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed. Staff work well together, have an accurate understanding of children's needs and ensure these are met consistently, using all available resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards across the school.
- Improve the rate of attendance.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Thank you very much for making me welcome when I visited your school recently. Special thanks to school councillors and children from Years 2 and 6 who gave up some time to tell me about your school. I agree with them: you attend an outstanding school.

The best things about your school are:

- the excellent progress you make
- challenging targets that keep you up to the mark
- lessons that help you all learn as well as possible
- the exciting super-learning days and topics you study
- the fantastic displays all round the school
- the help for those of you who find learning difficult
- the really good start to learning that children in Nursery and Reception make
- the way all the staff take very good care of you
- the work of the school council
- the opportunities for those of you who are gifted and talented
- your hardworking teachers
- the way your headteacher ensures your school improves all the time.

I have asked the headteacher and staff to make the school even better by:

- helping you to reach higher standards in your tests
- improving attendance.

You can play your part by continuing to work very hard and making sure that, unless you really are unwell, you always come to school.