

St Philip's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104902
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	324128
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Williams HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.
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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	209
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Tim Hall
Headteacher	Mr Brian Johnson
Date of previous school inspection	June 2006
School address	Hampton Road Southport Merseyside PR8 6SS
Telephone number	01704 535737
Fax number	01704 541902
Email address	head.StPhilipsSouthport@schools.sefton.gov.uk

Age group	5–11
Inspection date(s)	10–11 March 2009
Inspection number	324128

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector. The inspectors visited 12 lessons; met with parents; and held meetings with groups of governors, teaching staff, teaching assistants and pupils. They observed the school's work, looked at a range of documentation and analysed the 81 parental questionnaires returned. They looked in detail at:

- whether the outstanding attitudes and attributes of pupils identified in the 2006 inspection are still evident and whether improvements have been made in the areas that were judged to be good
- whether the areas of strength in standards have been at least maintained and whether all pupils make at least good progress
- how well teaching; assessment; the curriculum: and support, guidance and care is adapted to promote purposeful learning, enjoyment, progress and attainment for all pupils
- how well school leaders can demonstrate
 - capacity for sustained improvement
 - improvement since the last inspection
 - the school is meeting its statutory duties
 - sustained excellence in the promotion of equality of opportunity
- whether or not the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.

Information about the school

This is an average-size primary school. Attainment on entry, although variable from year to year, is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. There is a very small and increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. The school holds a number of awards, including National Healthy Schools, Activemark, the International Schools Award and the Princess Diana Memorial Anti-Bullying Award.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Outstanding levels of support, guidance and care lie at the heart of this good and improving school, underpinned by the very strong Christian ethos. It is led well by a passionate and enthusiastic headteacher who is supported by good senior leaders, a committed staff and an impressive governing body. As a result of overall good quality leadership, previous strengths have been at least maintained and in a number of areas enhanced. Pupils achieve well and, by the time they leave school at the age of 11, they attain standards that are above average. They consistently attain high standards in science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, because of the high-quality support they receive from teaching assistants in particular, make outstanding progress in literacy, numeracy and in developing the skills for learning. The school's commitment to developing the whole child is demonstrated by pupils' outstanding attitudes and attributes in the following outcomes: being safe; adopting healthy lifestyles; contribution to the school and wider community; development of workplace and other skills; and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition, there have been improvements in the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This is now outstanding and children get off to a cracking start here.

The school knows itself well and parents have confidence in it. It has made good progress since the previous inspection, particularly in engaging pupils in more practical activities in science and ensuring that subject leaders get into classes to see teaching and learning in their subjects. Leaders know that standards in writing are not as high as in reading, mathematics and science. However, the work the school has undertaken to improve writing is beginning to pay dividends. Leaders also recognise other areas which could be developed. For example, while teaching is good, it could be enhanced further by teachers adopting a more consistent approach to the planning of lessons. In addition, the school holds a wealth of good-quality information about how well pupils achieve in their learning and personal development. This information, however, is not always summarised as effectively as it might be to assist the school in its future plans. Nonetheless, this is a school moving forward at a good pace. Given the improvements since the previous inspection and the school's awareness of what needs to be improved, it is demonstrating good capacity to improve even further. It is involving parents more in the life of the school, through welcoming 'drop in' coffee mornings for example; it continues to extend the range of good-quality extra-curricular activities and deploys its resources outstandingly well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

The school should build on its existing strengths by:

- continuing the good work in raising standards of writing across the school
- developing a consistent approach to teachers' planning of lessons
- ensuring that the existing good-quality information is more effectively summarised to better inform the school of pupils' progress.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

The pupils of St Philip's, from the very youngest to the oldest, are a credit to the school and themselves. Their attendance is above average and their behaviour good. Often pupils' behaviour is exemplary but there are times in lessons when they are not always attentive to what the adult or their peers are saying. Nonetheless, they are very caring and show a deep, mature understanding of the needs and feelings of their peers and those outside the school, demonstrated by their contributions in assemblies and charitable fundraising for 'World Vision' for, example. They relish the opportunities for responsibility and take these up by assuming a number of important roles. These include acting as members of the school council, being 'Super Savers' (ensuring that lights are switched off, recycling items and taking on other environmental responsibilities), helping to avoid any conflict that may arise through working as peer mediators, and being buddies to each other. Most impressive is the willingness of pupils, regardless of whether they hold these roles or not, to act upon the advice and decisions of their peers. The school council holds a particularly important role in involving all pupils in the life of the school. Through its access to a budget of £10,000 it has canvassed the views of pupils to develop the outside area and has met with contractors regarding recent building extensions. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding awareness of what contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They thoroughly enjoy participating in the increased range of activities, including music, drama and sport. Through such activities, music in particular, they are well known in the community. All in all, the many outstanding attributes pupils demonstrate in their personal development shows they are very well equipped to go on to the next stage of their education.

Further good contributing factors to the development of the whole child at St Philip's are the above average standards attained in national tests and the overall good progress in learning as seen in pupils' work. Since the previous inspection standards attained in mathematics have been above average and high in science. In 2008 two thirds of pupils who took the end of Year 6 test attained the higher level. In English, standards are broadly average because writing standards are not as high as they could be. Nonetheless, the school's determined actions are leading to improvements. In attaining these standards, and through their work in books, pupils make good progress in their learning, although progress is not always even throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high-quality support

from teaching assistants both in and out of the classroom. As a result, they make outstanding progress not only in literacy and numeracy but also in the skills for learning and life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	1
Pupils' attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The school provides its pupils with outstanding levels of support guidance and care. There are very good systems in place to ensure the effective transition into Year 1 and on to high school. Pupils are very confident that adults in the school will help them. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are identified early and additional support arranged quickly. Teaching assistants are deployed very well to support these pupils, making use of high-quality individual education plans. The use of assessment is good, overall. The school holds a wealth of good-quality information about what pupils can or cannot do in their learning, their personal development and the standards they attain. Writing assessments in particular are helpful and regularly inform future planning and target setting. Nonetheless, leaders are aware that this vast amount of information could be more effectively summarised to better inform the school of pupils' progress.

Teaching throughout the school is good and relationships very positive. While sometimes pupils are not as attentive as they might be, teachers handle such occasions well and there is a calm working atmosphere throughout the school. Adults question and prompt pupils well to develop their thinking skills. Activities are often practical and pupils enjoy these. On occasions though, the conclusion of lessons can be rushed leaving insufficient time to check on learning. In addition, there is some inconsistency in the way lessons are planned. Nonetheless, pupils make good progress in lessons as demonstrated by their work in books and above average standards attained. The curriculum is good and since the previous inspection has been enhanced by an increase in the range of extra-curricular activities. The

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

curriculum provides particularly well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also for French, performing arts and physical education. Good coverage is given to all the foundation subjects as well as English and mathematics. The Year 1 curriculum is currently being modified to take into account the transition from Reception. Although not embedded, its beginnings are good as seen in the way the pupils enthusiastically made mobiles, baked biscuits and made model palaces in preparation for Cinderella's ball.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is led well by the headteacher and his leadership team. It is effective in ensuring that pupils make good and sometimes better progress in their learning, and demonstrate often outstanding attitudes and attributes in their personal development. As a result, the outstanding way in which the school promotes equality of opportunity, identified at the previous inspection, has been maintained.

All in the school are clear about the vision and supportive of it. Leaders have ensured that subject leaders have developed their skills well and now enjoy opportunities to see their subjects in action in classes other than their own. The governing body is proactive and supports the school very well, as well as asking important questions about the school's performance. It has sought the views of parents and has been instrumental in securing additional space for the school. It meets all its duties and has ensured that, at the time of this inspection, the exemplary way in which pupils are safeguarded has been maintained. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Having drafted a policy and undertaken some initial research, governors are currently exploring further ways of enhancing this important area.

The school has excellent partnerships with outside agencies. It also surveys the views of pupils and takes on board what they say. Its relationship with parents is good and improving. Nearly all respondents to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the work of the school. A very small number though believe links could be stronger, especially in gaining information about what their children are learning and how well they are doing. The appointment of a parent support adviser in September 2008 to strengthen links with parents further has been welcomed. Her work, particularly in organising 'drop ins', has been appreciated.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1

Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	1
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage – good at the time of the previous inspection – has improved and is judged to be outstanding. Children now get off to a cracking good start in the Reception class. They settle in quickly and benefit from excellent teaching and very good relationships between staff and parents.

Outstanding use is made of the learning environment, both indoors and outdoors. Adults make careful assessments of what children can or cannot do and use these very well to plan meaningful and challenging activities. There is an outstanding range of imaginative activities, for example exploring senses through the texture and smell of large quantities of jelly. There is just the right balance of adult-led and child-selected activities. The result of such outstanding provision is that children become rapidly independent and gain the skills and abilities necessary to move into Year 1 and beyond very well indeed. Children who speak English as an additional language become increasingly confident in speaking and developing an extended vocabulary. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are outstanding.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1

Views of parents and carers

There were 81 responses to the inspection questionnaire, representing the views of the parents of 108 children. The responses were positive and supportive of the school although a very small number expressed some concerns regarding behaviour and a lack of information. Nonetheless, many comments were very positive including those about the way in which the school cares for and supports pupils, and the approachability of staff. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. While no incidents of poor behaviour were seen during the inspection, in the playground for example, the inspection report does comment on some instances of pupils not being as attentive as they ought. Nonetheless, behaviour is good.

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. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
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.



12 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Philip's Church of England Primary School, Southport,
PR8 6SS

Thank you for welcoming Mrs Murphy and me to your school for its recent inspection. We appreciated your politeness and the time you spent with us. We were impressed that you demonstrated many mature attitudes in your personal development, being healthy and staying safe for example. These features, along with your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, your contribution to the community, and your preparation for the next stages of your school we have judged to be outstanding. Very well done! We have judged your attendance to be above average and your behaviour to be good. We think it could be better than that if all of you made sure you were always attentive in class. We know you can do this because we saw the very polite and considerate way you are usually. In addition to these very positive attributes, you also make good progress in your learning and attain above average standards by the time you leave for secondary school.

So why is this the case? Well, first your school is led and managed well. All adults play their part in the smooth running of the school and wanting the best for you. Your headteacher is passionate and enthusiastic, the teaching assistants give very good help and support, and the governors keep a very close eye on the school. Through the hard work of the adults the school provides you with outstanding levels of support, guidance and care, and good teaching. The subjects you learn are interesting too and it is good to hear about the performing arts, PE and French being taught. We know you enjoy these activities, along with the after-school clubs. We also know the local community enjoy your musical talents, singing in *'Oliver'* and playing in the band for example.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? We have asked your leaders to build on the school's existing strengths and improve your standards in writing further. In addition, we have asked that there be more consistency in the way your good lessons are planned and that the information the school has about you is better used. We know you will do your part in helping the school to do these things. After all, you attend a good school with parts which are outstanding. Congratulations!

Every good wish for the future!

Mark Williams
Her Majesty's Inspector