

St James Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105848
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	324284
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	237
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jared Sudworth
Headteacher	Miss Catherine Aden
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Crossfield Road Wardle Rochdale Lancashire OL12 9JW

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	18–19 May 2009
Inspection number	324284

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a school of average size serving the village of Wardle. It is situated in an area of some social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are of White British backgrounds and none are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average although the percentage with a statement of special educational need is above average. The school holds the Activemark and Healthy Schools awards and the United Nations Rights Respecting School award. There is a separate childcare provision on site which was not included in this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with a number of outstanding features. Uppermost of these is the excellent quality of the school's provision for pupils' pastoral welfare, which underpins pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. The school capitalises on its strong values to provide a very positive environment for learning where pupils achieve well in both their academic and personal development. The parents and carers of many pupils comment very favourably on how their children feel valued. Others commend, in particular, the excellent levels of personal responsibility demonstrated by the pupils. The outstanding innovative curriculum enables many subjects to be studied in themes, providing excellent opportunities for pupils to develop key skills.

From starting points which are generally at those expected for their age, children make good progress in Reception. This is built on well in Key Stage 1. Good quality teaching provides pupils with a sound foundation for learning, promoting the further development of skills at Key Stage 2. The progress pupils make in Key Stage 2 quickens, as they mature and gain steadily in confidence and independence. Pupils achieve well and, by the end of Key Stage 2 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The considerable focus upon improving standards in English has had a significant impact with an above average proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. The school is now providing a similar focus to the development of mathematics skills but a similar number of pupils do not yet reach the higher levels in the subject. Pupils are prepared well for their future economic well-being. The strong emphasis upon inclusion offers wide-ranging provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, helping them to make good progress alongside their classmates.

The excellent curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' development. It is particularly effective in ensuring that pupils have an excellent awareness of how to use their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have an excellent knowledge of safe practices. They enjoy their learning and make a good contribution to both the school and local community. Varied opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) foster pupils' self-esteem and their very positive attitudes to learning. There is an excellent variety of enrichment activities, including themed weeks, although opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge higher attaining pupils through mathematical activities.

Teaching is consistently good. Teachers manage pupils well and establish strong relationships with them. Consequently, pupils are responsive, concentrate fully and persevere in their work. Care and welfare arrangements are of high quality and ensure that pupils are happy and secure in school. The school's systems for monitoring pupils' progress and identifying pupils who would benefit from extra support are extremely effective in supporting their learning.

The school benefits from good quality leadership and management. The headteacher provides outstanding leadership with a clear vision, shared by all, and a well understood purpose to all activities. It has good capacity to improve further and plans for its future development focus precisely on improving pupils' academic achievement. The school makes excellent use of partnerships with other schools and organisations to promote pupils' enjoyment of school and their well-being. Its nationally recognised accreditation as a 'Rights Respecting School' enables pupils and adults to understand fully their responsibilities for learning and their impact on the lives of others. Successful links have been forged with other schools, locally, nationally and in other countries to share and develop the expertise of the staff. As a result the school makes a

good contribution to community cohesion. The school has improved extremely well since its previous inspection and offers good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage across all the areas of learning. This is because it is well led and managed. Careful planning based on previous observations and assessment of the children, ensures that learning is progressive and suited to the needs of the children. An emphasis on phonics has been a key factor in enabling children to improve their command of the links between letters and sounds. By the time children join Year 1, the majority are working securely within the Early Learning Goals and some reach the higher levels. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities acquire the basic skills at a good rate. Parents are very much involved, beginning with children's initial assessments and the sensitive induction process accommodates any individual needs. Adults have high expectations and there are clear routines which enable the children to feel safe. There is a focus on personal development and this is supported by children having opportunities to gain points for their team for rewards from the sparkly box'. Good teaching ensures that the children have fun while learning and as a result children are confident with positive attitudes to their learning. Great care is taken to provide the children with an environment conducive to learning; however, this is not always used to full effect. Opportunities are sometimes missed to allow children to initiate their own learning, with adults ready to interact to extend and support this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Provide regular opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to choose from planned learning activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make successful steps in their learning in Key Stage 1 and acquire the excellent attitudes towards learning, which underpin their good progress. In this key stage, pupils do well in reading and writing because the school has refined over several years effective strategies for teaching these skills. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. In Key Stage 2 English skills are taught well in daily focused lessons and through other subjects. This helps pupils develop their skills and become enthusiastic and fluent readers and effective writers. Pupils also use investigational skills effectively, in science to reach above average standards. Overall, by the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well and reach standards which are above average. Relatively small proportions of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in mathematics. The school has recognised this and is beginning to focus upon identifying opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils. The extensive provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including well focused teaching assistant support, ensures that they achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Even the youngest pupils have a highly developed awareness of how to stay healthy, keep safe and take personal responsibility for their actions.

This knowledge extends to new technologies, such as the risks associated with the misuse of internet access. Older pupils are quick to support younger pupils, for example through their play leader activities and looking after younger children during lunch. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils respond exceptionally well to reverential moments in assemblies. These moments of spiritual reflection are coupled with reminders of personal responsibility to help pupils reflect on their duties towards others. During a conversation about choices, for example, children remarked, 'It's up to us to tell the truth.' Pupils have a good awareness of multicultural issues as a result of visitors representing other faiths. They raise funds for a number of charities and have used these funds to support a child in Malawi. Excellent relationships are the bedrock of pupils' highly positive attitudes towards their learning and pride in their school. The staff seek to nurture pupils' self-esteem at every opportunity. Pupils respond enthusiastically to this encouragement and behave exceptionally well. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils exploit other opportunities to contribute to the life of the school very well, for example contributing to the school council, the eco and healthy school committees. Their good achievement in the basic academic skills sets them up well for their later lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Excellent classroom relationships foster pupils' eagerness to learn and their good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is good. All pupils exploit well the ample opportunities to contribute orally to lessons. This, in turn, promotes their self-confidence and a conscientious approach to their work. Skilled teaching assistants and other adults make a valuable contribution to lessons by maintaining the brisk pace of learning. They add great enjoyment to pupils' learning when fully involved in activities. Teachers have a good understanding of pupils' prior learning and engage them effectively in considering the next steps. Pupils benefit from good oral feedback which provides them with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve. Teachers also use a range of ICT devices and programs skilfully in all phases of the lesson to motivate pupils and to support their learning. Planning for most lessons is detailed and varied, but on a few occasions, opportunities are missed to extend and reinforce the learning of higher attaining pupils. A Year 4 mathematics lesson, for example, encouraged opportunities for pupils to test out their learning about directional grids on the electronic whiteboard. Such examples promote pupils' self-esteem very effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The excellent curriculum is well balanced, suitably adapted for learners and provides an outstanding programme for personal and social development. The wide variety of enrichment activities includes visits, visitors, expert specialist tuition and after-school clubs. The curriculum makes explicit links between a range of subjects and this has successfully raised standards in English, mathematics and science. The use of ICT, such as electronic whiteboards, is consistent in all classes; adults and pupils use ICT effectively and pupils' confidence and skill levels are high. The use of specialist teachers in music and sport raises standards in these areas and pupils speak enthusiastically about their clubs and sporting successes. They take great pleasure in practical music sessions and their brass band successfully takes part in a number of musical festivals. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 gain a great deal from their residential visit to Dobroyd Castle,

Todmorden, learning through outdoor activities and team-building exercises. Opportunities for pupils to apply their well-developed skills and knowledge to produce imaginative cross-curricular studies are a consistent feature across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school cares for, guides and supports pupils exceptionally well. The leadership team is highly effective in making learning easier for pupils with identified needs. Similarly, leaders have worked successfully to raise attendance and punctuality to their current good level. Suitable procedures promote child protection, safeguarding, health and safety well and systems meet current national guidelines. Transition arrangements between the key stages and to ensure a smooth transfer to secondary school are thorough and very effective. The staff are excellent role models and their tireless efforts to promote pupils' well-being contribute well to the harmonious and well ordered community.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit from clearly written individual plans. Highly effective monitoring of all pupils' progress directs the focus of support programmes and ensures that pupils understand the next steps in learning and meet their challenging targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's enthusiasm, hands-on approach and commitment to pupils' pastoral well-being are outstanding in establishing a good climate for learning and personal development. Staff work well together and make good use of opportunities to develop and share their expertise, for example through joint activities with other schools. The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion, constantly working to strengthen its links with the local and wider community. For example it is beginning to arrange useful exchanges with schools whose pupils have differing ethnic and cultural backgrounds. It has developed some good links with Uganda and Malawi. Priorities are clearly identified and actions are taken purposefully to enhance pupils' welfare and impressive personal development. School self-evaluation is accurate, engages the school community and has moved the school forward considerably since its previous inspection. Governors support and challenge the school well. The school offers good value for money.

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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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of St James Church of England Primary School, Rochdale,

OL12 9JW

My colleague and I really enjoyed our inspection of your school. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us. You go to a good school and several parts of its work are excellent. These are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- Children get off to a good start in Reception. By the time you leave school in Year 6 you have made good progress to reach standards which are above average.
- The way that the curriculum is organised is excellent, making your learning especially interesting and you say how much you enjoy it.
- Your personal development is outstanding. You take your responsibilities very seriously. We were also very impressed by your behaviour and your enjoyment of school, which came across very clearly in lessons.
- Staff look after you extremely well. They work hard to make sure that no one is left out. Pupils who need extra help with their learning get lots of useful support from the teaching assistants and other adults.
- You are well taught. Everyone gets on really well in the classroom so you have lots of good opportunities to become confident when you practise new skills.
- You have the headteacher and the staff to thank for their hard work in making sure that you are happy and settled in school.

I have asked your school to do two things to make it even better:

- make sure more pupils reach the higher levels in their mathematics work
- provide regular opportunities in the Reception class for children to choose from planned learning activities.

You can help by keeping up your hard work and continuing to accept responsibilities for yourself and others.