

St Hilda's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105702
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	336541
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Onyon

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	376
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr A Armitage
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Pursey
Date of previous school inspection	7 March 2007
School address	Tilbury Street Oldham Lancashire OL1 2HJ
Telephone number	0161 6243592
Fax number	0161 2871351
Email address	info@sthildas.oldham.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2010
Inspection number	336541

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 rates 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 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 17 lessons, observing more than six hours of learning. They observed 13 teachers and held meetings with the senior leadership team, governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at, amongst other things, safeguarding documents, the school's data records, policies, minutes of governing body meetings and the notes of the school improvement partner's visits. Parental questionnaires were received from 44 parents or carers. In addition, questionnaires were received from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether the school could provide convincing evidence that pupils' achievement, learning and progress are good
- the quality of teaching to determine whether it is good enough throughout the school to enable pupils to do as well as they are able
- the strength of provision for pupils who face considerable barriers to learning
- the quality of leadership and management to determine whether it is good enough to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This larger than average-sized school serves an urban community close to the centre of Oldham. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is double the national average. All pupils are of minority ethnic heritage and are learning English as an additional language. A small minority are in the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average, with an average proportion with statements of special educational needs.

The school holds the Healthy School and Active School awards and has achieved the Leading Parent Partnership award.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school with a number of outstanding features, most noticeably the outstanding engagement of parents and carers and the excellent partnerships with other providers. The pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. The school's work in securing community cohesion is outstanding and this results in excellent quality care, guidance and support for all the pupils. Because pupils are so well cared for, they feel safe and secure, are happy, and have positive attitudes to learning. Parents and carers are very pleased with the all-round experiences their children have in school.

Since the last inspection, through a number of well-planned interventions, writing standards have improved, and the school has sustained a number of outstanding features. This track record of sustained improvement illustrates well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team provide. Through rigorous self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans carefully to address these issues. It demonstrates a commitment to develop staff including focused training and staff involvement in monitoring and evaluating progress towards agreed priorities. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further. Pupils' achievement is good. Most children enter the Nursery with little skill in speaking English. The school ensures that well-planned language support is in place to enable children to make good early progress. Inspection evidence shows that Year 6 pupils are currently on track to reach average standards in English and mathematics. Progress in mathematics has not been as brisk as that in English because there are few planned opportunities for pupils to solve problems and carry out investigations or to use their numeracy skills in other subjects. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, make good progress.

Teaching is good and helps pupils to learn well. Good quality and reliable systems to track pupils' progress are well established and give accurate information about what pupils know and can do. This information is not always used to best effect by all teachers to let pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils are reluctant to take responsibility for progress and seek adult approval before moving on. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because it is underpinned strongly by the very good role models provided by adults in the school. Pupils behave well. They report that they enjoy the range of visits and visitors, after-school clubs and groups. They enjoy the opportunities presented in the good curriculum, particularly where subjects are linked through topics.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good progress in raising standards in writing to accelerate progress in mathematics by:
 - providing more challenging opportunities for pupils to use numeracy skills to solve problems and carry out investigations
 - systematically planning opportunities to use numeracy skills in other subjects.
- Use the outcomes of assessment more effectively by:
 - ensuring pupils have a greater understanding of how well they are doing and the steps they need to take to improve their work
 - encouraging pupils to take more responsibility for their progress and be independent learners.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn well in lessons and are eager to learn. They make good progress both personally and academically because they behave well and have good attitudes to learning. From Nursery to Year 6 all groups of pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Whilst progress in mathematics has not been as swift as that in writing, attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average with a growing trend of improvement.

Pupils enjoy being in school. This is evident in their happy smiling faces and the very positive and enthusiastic comments they make, such as, 'My school is great because we all help each other.' and 'I enjoy coming to school because the people really care about me.' Pupils are polite, friendly and very respectful. They treat each other with respect and tolerance, they know the difference between right and wrong and they raise significant funds for charities in this country and other parts of the world. They speak confidently about how safe they are in school and they know how to deal with the dangers they might meet on the internet or in other aspects of their daily lives. Pupils' contribution to the local and wider community is outstanding, exemplified well by their involvement as junior leaders and in a number of publicised local campaigns to improve the area. They are very willing to undertake responsibilities and act sensibly when unsupervised. A large number of pupils are involved in class, infant and junior school councils and the work of the school's eco council. Pupils are gaining skills rapidly and are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education. The school works unceasingly to ensure that the community understands the value of coming to school and pupils' overall attendance is average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Staff know the pupils and their families extremely well and the school is valued and trusted by the local community. Partnerships between home and school are excellent, and are based on mutual respect and confidence. The school supports a wide range of learning opportunities for adults, very effectively encouraging parents and carers to support their children's learning. Detailed records of pupils considered to be vulnerable are meticulously and securely maintained. A very strong programme of personal, social and health education raises pupils' awareness of the risks and dangers they face extremely effectively. The school works tirelessly to improve pupils' attendance and vigorously encourages parents and carers to avoid long-term absences during term times.

Good teaching ensures all lessons are characterised by harmonious, positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Regular assessments of what pupils know and can do are accurate. This enables teachers to keep a close watch on pupils' progress and ensures that any gaps in learning are identified quickly and addressed promptly, particularly in writing; often through well planned work for individuals and groups. Discussion with pupils indicates that, whilst they have learning targets, they are not always clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve further.

The curriculum has a necessarily strong focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and pupils work in ability groups, effectively ensuring their progress. Pupils in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are provided for well. Pupils enjoy the recently introduced international primary curriculum because it

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

links subjects together in topics. Opportunities to solve problems and carry out investigations, using numeracy skills, are not always evident, slowing progress in numeracy. Good use is made of modern technologies to support pupils' learning. Excellent partnerships with a range of outside professionals, artists, performers and other schools, enriches the curriculum. This successfully widens pupils' horizons and raises their aspirations.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The effective and resilient headteacher has worked steadfastly to sustain a number of excellent features identified at the time of the last inspection. Issues identified at that time have successfully been addressed. The dedicated staff and governors have a shared ambition to do their very best for the pupils. Leadership and management roles are clear and well understood. Governors bring strong community links that benefit pupils and their families, and they hold the school properly to account for its outcomes. Careful planning and evaluation ensures that the promotion of community cohesion is excellent. It is the basis for everything that this school does. Pupils mix harmoniously together as well as showing an awareness of wider global issues. Parents and carers are welcomed into school as learners. The school has a strong commitment to helping them support their children's learning. There are good procedures to promote equality of opportunity; there is positive recognition and celebration of diversity; there is no discrimination. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are good and meet all requirements, thus successfully ensuring that the school is a safe and secure environment. The school gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	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	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they start in the Nursery the skills of all children are at very low levels when compared to expectations for their age, with many at a very early stage of learning English as an additional language. The Nursery is a bright, attractive, welcoming and secure learning environment and the children settle quickly and happily. Teaching is good and with good support from bilingual staff, children begin their learning journey promptly. They make good progress in all areas of learning, though most are behind expected levels by the time they join the Reception classes. The children soon gain a sense of belonging to a group and readily take on responsibility.

A well-balanced range of practical activities is provided in the Nursery and Reception classes, some led by adults and some which the children are able to choose for themselves. As a result they choose equipment sensibly and fairly, tidy up afterwards and know how to care for themselves. Because of the location of the building, access to provision for learning outdoors is limited for Reception children. Staff plan well to overcome the challenge and ensure that outdoor opportunities are timetabled to ensure children's safety. This is a barrier to ensuring a continuous curriculum as children move through the Early Years Foundation Stage. Nonetheless, good leadership and management ensure that children's progress is carefully monitored and tracked, and that the school pays full regard to children's care and welfare.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are happy with all aspects of the school's work and its

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

effectiveness. All agreed that the school keeps children safe. A very small minority feel that the school does not take account of suggestions they make. Some parents and carers feel that the specific learning needs of pupils are not met by the school. Inspectors find that the school makes considerable efforts to encourage parents and carers to offer suggestions and to be involved with the work of the school. Pupils with specific learning needs are identified early and a wide range of provision is put into place to support their progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Hilda's CofE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 376 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	70	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	25	57	17	39	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	55	20	45	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	64	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	48	22	50	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	52	21	48	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	52	19	43	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	36	24	55	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	48	21	48	1	2	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	52	19	43	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	57	17	39	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	59	17	39	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



11 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Hilda's CofE Primary School, Oldham, OL1 2HJ

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school for its recent inspection. We appreciated your politeness and enjoyed talking with you. We were impressed by your pride in your school and enjoyed observing your lessons and other activities. The way in which you contribute to the school and the wider community is excellent. The quality of care, support and guidance provided for you is outstanding. Your school promotes community cohesion exceptionally well and works very effectively with your parents and carers and other partners to help you learn and to look after you. Your progress is best in writing and you make good progress in your learning, reaching expected standards by Year 6.

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, the teachers and teaching assistants give you good help and support and the governors keep a close eye on the school. You told us about the good teaching and we agree. The subjects you learn are interesting too and it is good to hear about your involvement in the various school councils and the eco council. You clearly enjoy the topics in the international primary curriculum, and you told us the topics are fun.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? We have asked the leaders of the school to use the outcomes of the assessment of your progress to help you understand how well you are doing and what steps you need to take to improve further; so that you can take more responsibility for your own learning. To speed your progress in mathematics we have asked them to give you more opportunities to use your numeracy skills in solving problems and carrying out investigations, especially in your topics.

You attend a good school with things that are outstanding. Congratulations!

Yours sincerely

Mr Michael Onyon

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 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.