

Didsbury Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105506
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	324232
Inspection dates	11 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ms Julie Price Grimshaw

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 on roll	
School (total)	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Andrew Bradley
Headteacher	Mr Matt Whitehead
Date of previous school inspection	September 2005
School address	Elm Grove Didsbury Manchester M20 6RL
Telephone number	0161 445 7144
Fax number	0161 445 7144

Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	11 November 2008
Inspection number	324232

© Crown copyright 2008

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

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the effectiveness of the school's guidance to pupils in supporting academic achievement; the care of pupils and the impact of this on their personal development. Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data and the school's own records; scrutiny of pupils' work, a range of school documentation and parents' questionnaires; observations of the school at work; and discussions with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school situated in an area of relative social and economic advantage, although many pupils travel from further afield. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has risen steadily over recent years and is close to the national average, although only a small proportion of these pupils speak English as an additional language. There is Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school where pupils achieve exceptionally well in their academic and personal development. It is a warm and friendly place where everyone is made to feel welcome. Many parents remark on this, with comments such as 'The ethos is warm, positive and one of mutual respect' and 'The school instils a sense of belonging which enables my child to feel secure.' Pupils greet visitors with a smile and talk about their school with tremendous pride.

The quality of care and support provided by the school has improved since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They feel safe, secure and confident in school and staff take every opportunity to promote high self-esteem. Much attention is paid to pupils' social and moral development and pupils are taught to be kind and caring to each other at all times. Older pupils relish the opportunity to take care of the younger ones. Although much of the school's work is underpinned by Christian teaching, pupils have an excellent awareness of other faiths and cultures. This is promoted from the EYFS through to Year 6 and enhanced through visits to various places of worship. Pupils feel that their school is a very happy community and they are keen to support local, national and international charities. This is reflected in parents' comments such as 'The children are encouraged to think about others, globally, through fair trade initiatives, as well as locally.' Pupils' exemplary behaviour, reinforced by the school's very effective rewards systems, is evident both in and out of classrooms. Attendance is well above the national average. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles; they speak with confidence about the possible effects of foods containing additives and even children in the EYFS say that healthy food 'Helps us to run faster!' Pastoral care is first-rate and all safeguarding requirements are met.

As a result of good teaching year-on-year and outstanding academic guidance, pupils make excellent progress throughout the school. When children enter the EYFS their skills are mostly in line with typical age-related expectations. By the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally high. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in English, mathematics and science is consistently well above the national average. The school's expertise in using data enables staff to respond swiftly and effectively to any decline in these positive trends. For example, a dip in standards in Key Stage 1 in mathematics in 2007 was identified and tackled immediately, and attainment in this area has now returned to previous high levels. The excellent curriculum promotes strong achievement by providing many opportunities for pupils to practise literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across a range of subjects. Staff tailor lessons closely to the needs of individual pupils and extra support ensures that pupils make the best possible progress. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning to speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates. Similarly, some of the most able pupils make remarkable progress. The curriculum in Year 1 is extremely well planned to retain elements of the EYFS. The fact that children work in small groups on a variety of tasks and are encouraged to choose activities from time to time, accelerates their progress and is very effective in helping them to settle into Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy taking part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. Their confidence is developed through many opportunities to perform in musical and dramatic productions. They love the many trips to

museums and art galleries and look forward with great excitement to the Year 6 residential trip. One pupil reflected a typical view of this activity in the comment 'I'll always treasure my memories of the fun we had.'

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school and there are examples of outstanding classroom practice in all key stages. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Pupils say 'Our teachers are firm, fair and very good at making learning fun and exciting!' ICT is used extremely well to enhance teaching and learning. A major strength of the school's work is the way in which the highly competent support staff are deployed. They work with pupils of all abilities and are very confident in leading and supporting learning. Marking of pupils' work by teachers is mostly of very high quality. However, in a small minority of cases, this feedback is less effective, particularly with regard to informing pupils of the next steps they need to take.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is the driving force behind the school's success. Many parents comment on the professionalism, approachability and commitment of the headteacher. Leaders and managers at all levels are involved in monitoring the quality of the school's work and information is used well to produce sharply focused improvement planning. Even so the school is modest in judging its work. Governors have extensive involvement in school life and are very well informed. A key strength of the school is the superb teamwork of adults, with teachers, support staff, trainee teachers and parent volunteers working together to provide the best they can for pupils. Excellent partnerships have also been established with external agencies. Many improvements have been made since the last inspection as reflected when a parent, summing up the views of many, commented that the school's leadership has 'taken Didsbury Church of England School onto another level'. The school provides excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Grade: 1

Children make outstanding progress. From starting points mostly typical for their age, by the end of the EYFS many exceed the early learning goals. 'I cannot believe the progress my child has made in this wonderful Nursery' sums up the view of parents on the quality of the EYFS as a whole. Curricular planning in the Nursery and Reception classes is of excellent quality and ensures that children have the opportunity to engage fully in a wide range of fun activities across all areas of learning. Parents are kept fully informed through a detailed class letter that enables them to take an active role in extending learning at home. The quality of teaching is strong and children make rapid progress in their learning. The very skilled team of staff are particularly good at knowing when and how to intervene in children's activities in order to best promote learning. Children are encouraged to use the pleasant outdoor area in all weathers and there are good links between indoor and outdoor learning. Leadership and management of the EYFS are outstanding. Organisation is superb and much attention is paid to ensuring children are safe. Even the youngest children are aware of procedures to be followed in case of fire. Children's progress is regularly assessed through observations and the information gained is used very effectively to plan future learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of all marking to that of the best.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Achievement and standards

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

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
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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	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.

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?	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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	1
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



12 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Didsbury Church of England Primary School, Manchester, M20 6RL

I visited your school recently with another inspector. Thank you for making us feel so welcome. I would like to share our main findings with you.

You attend an outstanding school. It is led in an exceptional way. You told me that you thought your school was excellent and that you are proud to be part of it. It is a very friendly and welcoming place where everyone is very well cared for. You play an important part in this by looking after each other and being so kind and caring! You know a great deal about faiths and cultures other than your own and you are involved in some very important fund-raising for charities. Your behaviour is superb and I know that you enjoy coming to school – not just because of the smiling faces everywhere, but because the attendance rates for your school are well above average.

You make excellent progress throughout school and, by the time you leave in Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are much higher than in most other primary schools. This is due to your hard work, of course, but also to the teachers and support staff who work with you so well every day. They give you fantastic support so that every one of you achieves to your full potential. You told me how much you enjoy all the after-school clubs and the school trips are obviously very popular indeed! Many of you are looking forward to the residential trip in the final year. When I heard about the brilliant time that Year 6 pupils had this year I could understand why!

You know your targets for the future and most of the marking in your books gives you very clear direction on what you need to do to improve. I have suggested that everyone aims to mark your work in such a way that all the advice you receive is of this very high quality. You can help by reading the comments carefully and trying very hard to improve even more.

I am delighted that you are proud to be pupils at Didsbury Church of England Primary School and wish you well for the future.

Yours faithfully

Julie Price Grimshaw
Lead inspector