

St Agnes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105700
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	355818
Inspection dates	16–17 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neil Crook
Headteacher	Mrs Kirsten Swift
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed four teachers in their classrooms. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including: pupils' progress and attainment data; planning documents; policies; procedures and pupil records. They reviewed information provided by parents and carers in 37 completed questionnaires. They also took into account the views pupils expressed in the questionnaires they returned.

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

- The impact of the school's work on ensuring that pupils progress and attain as well as possible in English and mathematics.
- How effectively provision builds on pupils' skills from year to year, particularly how successful the school has been in ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better.
- How effectively leaders and managers are working to ensure that progress is consistently good or better across the school.

Information about the school

The school is small in comparison to most other primary schools and the site it occupies is also relatively small. It serves a rural district on the outskirts of the town, drawing its pupils from across a wide geographical area. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to that found in most schools. The proportion with special educational needs and/or difficulties is below average overall, although the school includes a higher-than-average proportion of pupils with statements of educational need. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other heritages. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is greater than in most schools. The school is an Investor in People. Since its last inspection it has also achieved a number of other externally validated awards, including the Activemark, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Green Flag Eco School Award.

The school's deputy headteacher became acting headteacher in September 2010, following the retirement of the previous headteacher. Leadership and management responsibilities were reallocated temporarily within the existing staff team and additional temporary staff were appointed. The recruitment and selection of a permanent headteacher was in progress at the time of the inspection. A before- and after-school club is offered on site by an independent company. This provision is subject to separate inspection and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

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 good school serves the needs of its community well. Its nurturing ethos provides pupils with outstanding care, guidance and support; as a result of this, they develop very positive attitudes to learning and demonstrate exemplary behaviour. The acting headteacher's effective leadership and the concerted efforts of the staff team have ensured that good provision, excellent care, and an ongoing drive for continuous improvement have been sustained successfully during a period of change. This has resulted in positive outcomes for pupils. Their progress in learning is good and their attainment, although currently average, is rising.

Most children's skill levels on entry to school are below expectations for their age. They progress well through the school, however, and go on to reach broadly average attainment by the end of Year 6. Good teaching and effective assessment are ensuring good levels of achievement. The standard of pupils' writing, in particular, has improved significantly in recent times and this is having a positive impact on the quality of their work across the areas of learning. Effective support is provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and this enables them to make the same good progress as their peers and to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

There are many formal and informal opportunities for pupils across the age-range to work and play together and this enhances the school's extremely supportive family ethos. Pastoral care is excellent and pupils play their part in ensuring this, with older children acting as buddies to younger ones. Good provision and leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean that children's education gets off to a positive start. However, facilities for learning outdoors, though providing some opportunities for learning, have not yet been developed to their maximum potential in the Reception class.

Self-evaluation is accurate, because it is based on systematic monitoring and rigorous assessment. School improvement is effective because priorities are correctly identified. However, the school development plan does not describe the criteria against which the success of improvement actions should be evaluated. This means that progress in different areas of the school's work is not measured as precisely it otherwise might be. Subject leaders are helping to assure the good quality of provision and senior staff are starting to play leading roles in driving improvement initiatives forward. This is having a positive impact on raising attainment. These factors, together with the skills and talents of the well-led staff team, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Identify success criteria in the school development plan, so that the impact of improvement actions can be evaluated more precisely.
- Develop and improve the outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children can enjoy learning through adventurous, investigative and independent play outdoors.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and their attitudes to school are extremely positive. They show a good understanding of the sound moral values the school promotes and this is reflected in their highly-considerate behaviour towards each other. They show great interest in their work, and are very responsive and keen to offer their ideas in discussions. Their concentration and study skills are developing well: they listen carefully and they see tasks through to completion. Pupils' overall achievement is good and they clearly enjoy learning. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly average in 2010, but was lower than it had been in previous years. This dip was related to an unusually high proportion of pupils with additional needs in the cohort. During the last school year, writing was identified as an area for improvement. The school's assessment data, evidence seen in lessons and pupils' current work all show that progress is improving rapidly and that attainment is rising well in all subjects, but particularly in writing, as a result of improvement actions that the school has taken. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well, as a result of the good support the school provides for them.

Pupils show a good understanding of issues around personal safety. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are confident that help is on hand if they encounter any problems. Pupils and parents agree that school is a place of safety. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and they participate enthusiastically in the range of activities provided to support their health, fitness and well-being. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example as influential school councillors. They are active fundraisers for charities at home and abroad. All of this, together with their improving basic skills, contributes to preparing them well for the next stages in their education. Attendance is above the national average.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall, with some outstanding practice. This contributes well to pupils' learning and progress and to their personal development. Lessons are planned well to take the range of pupils' needs into account. Expectations are high, and regular formal and informal assessment ensures that class teachers are able to identify problems and provide extra support when it is needed. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning, especially when working with those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum promotes learning and personal development well. Pupils enjoy an increasing number of opportunities to practise and develop their basic skills, especially in writing, through work across the range of subjects. Topics and themes which are interesting and relevant for pupils are helping to make learning fun. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports and music and to learn a modern foreign language. A range of visitors and visits helps to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Good teaching and support programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure they enjoy full access to learning and are included in everything on offer. Pastoral care is excellent and the school works very sensitively to support its more vulnerable pupils and their families. This is helping to break down barriers to learning and progress that some pupils encounter. Good attendance and punctuality are promoted very effectively. Good links with local high

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schools benefit pupils at transition. The school collaborates extremely well with a range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Staff and governors share the acting headteacher's firm commitment to driving improvement, and her ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. The role of middle leaders is being developed well and there is a strong team ethos. Regular reviews of assessment outcomes each half-term give a very clear picture of how much progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics and the school uses this information well to plan the next steps. The school development plan identifies appropriate actions for raising attainment and increasing progress, although it does not formally set out the criteria against which to measure success. This means that leaders' overview of how well the school is doing is less clearly defined than it could be, although the right priorities are being tackled. The supportive governing body is developing its capacity to hold the school to account. There are clear signs that its effectiveness is improving quickly.

Parents and carers appreciate all that is done to support their children's welfare. Effective communications ensure they are kept well-informed. The school complies well with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection through well-managed procedures and through ongoing review of their effectiveness. Staff receive high-quality training and the school works effectively with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm to its pupils. Its inclusive ethos supports the good promotion of equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement, and the school works effectively to tackle discrimination. The school contributes well to community cohesion through a range of partnerships and activities in the community, with the church and parish, through its good links with other local schools, and through its developing international links.

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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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When they enter the Reception class, most children's attainment is below expectations for their age. They make good progress, so that by the end of the school year most children are working at expected levels. They gain very positive attitudes and become happy, interested learners. The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a stimulating learning environment in the classroom. There is a good balance between the activities they choose for themselves and those led by adults, and this supports children well in developing the skills that lead to independence. Very effective assessment is informed by a wide range of evidence gathered through observations of the children in their activities, and staff use this information very well to plan the next steps in their learning and to meet their individual needs. The setting is highly effective in identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. Children interact very well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they grow in confidence, are happy and secure, and ready to learn. The small outdoor area is currently suitable only for supervised small group activities. These activities are of high quality and promote good learning, but there are insufficient opportunities for more independent learning outdoors. Staff are aware of this and are currently reviewing the use of the outdoor area, with a view to exploiting its potential as a learning resource more fully. Staff establish the positive relationships with parents and carers that prevail throughout the school. The setting is led and managed well and the staff team work together well. Provision is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are very good and meet all requirements.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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

Around one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost everyone who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's good overall effectiveness. Several parents commented on how eager their children are to come to school each day and on their confidence in the staff team. Their responses indicate that they place a high value on the school's caring ethos. Several parents commented that they feel the school prepares their children well for the future.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Agnes CE 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 inspector received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 104 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	76	8	22	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	65	13	35	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	35	18	49	6	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	54	14	38	2	5	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	21	57	16	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	32	20	54	4	11	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	73	8	22	2	5	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)	15	41	14	38	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	54	14	38	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	46	15	41	2	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	38	19	51	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	57	16	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	62	14	38	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



18 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Agnes CE Primary School, Oldham, OL4 5RU

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We found that St Agnes CE Primary is a good school and a very happy place for you to learn and grow together. You are extremely well behaved, polite and caring young people. You work hard in your lessons and you enjoy your work. You get on very well with each other and with the grown-ups in school. They look after you extremely well and give you excellent guidance and support. They have also been working hard to make sure you are taught well. You are making good progress in your learning and standards are rising rapidly. Keep up the good work!

There are still some things to do to help make your school even better. This is what we have asked the school's leaders to do.

- Improve the big plan that they make for the school each year, by putting more details in it about how they are going to measure the success of the actions they are planning to take.
- Improve the outdoor area for the children in Class One, so that they can learn more independently through a wider range of outdoor activities.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Diane Auton

Lead inspector

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