



# Prospect Vale Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106071  
**LEA** Stockport  
**Inspection number** 277480  
**Inspection dates** 14 September 2005 to 15 September 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Brian Padgett HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Prospect Vale
<b>School category</b>	Community		off Brown Lane
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Heald Green, Cheadle SK8 3RJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 437 4226
<b>Number on roll</b>	295	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 498 8708
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Anne Thompson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	29 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Lawless

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 September 2005 - 15 September 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277480
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is situated in a residential district of south-east Stockport. There are 300 children on the school's registers, including 38 aged 3 to 4 in the nursery. There are many more boys than girls. The area served by the school is neither particularly advantaged nor disadvantaged. Few children are entitled to a free school meal. Also, there are few children who have learning difficulties compared to most primary schools.

This is a popular and growing school. Only about half of the children live locally, the others come from nearby districts of Stockport and from Manchester. Class sizes are very high, close to 40 pupils in some junior classes. This is a significant concern of governors, staff and parents. Quite a number of parents apply to admit their children during term time.

The majority of children are of white British heritage but the school also has a sizeable and growing number of children from Pakistani heritage backgrounds.

## 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 school that provides good value for money. It has a justifiably high reputation with parents. It is a school where teachers enjoy teaching and where children enjoy learning.

The headteacher provides good leadership and ensures that the care, safety and well-being of all children are of very good quality. With an effective team of senior teachers to help promote and check on learning, and good quality teaching, children make good progress. They make a good start in the nursery and reception class. Children achieve well, attaining above average standards in Year 6 from an average starting point. Children work and play in harmony and their behaviour is very good.

The school sees itself as being satisfactory with some good features, but it is better than this. It has made good progress since the last inspection in 1999 and it is in a strong position to improve further once it has resolved the problem of how to provide for the increasing numbers of children attending the school.

### What the school should do to improve further

The school should:

- resolve the issue of very high class sizes so as to maintain and improve standards and the quality of education even further;
- develop pupils' skills of independence and encourage initiative within lessons;
- rewrite plans for the school's development to focus more tightly on raising standards and improving outcomes for pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above the average and children achieve well. The most recent national test results (2005) for 11 year olds are the highest in the school's recent history in English and science, and quite respectable in mathematics. Children of higher abilities do well, meeting and sometimes exceeding the challenging targets set for them. Children in the infant and nursery classes make good progress, particularly in acquiring the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy.

Good achievement has only occurred in the past year. Since the last inspection, standards have been broadly average and achievement no better than satisfactory. However, more recently, there has been tighter tracking of children's progress, raised expectations and a clearer focus on those aspects where children's performance was weaker, such as that of boys and more able pupils, and in writing and in science. As a result, significant gains have been made.

All groups of learners achieve well. Children of Pakistani heritage are represented amongst the highest achieving, as well as amongst those who receive help with learning English. Children who have learning difficulties make good progress. The attention

given to these children and the effectiveness of their support were a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection and continue to be maintained at this level. Boys now achieve as well as girls.

The difficulty of managing classes with large numbers of children is most felt within the junior classes. On the whole, the school manages the situation successfully, by making good use of the available staff. For example, two lessons are arranged for one class at the same time so that only half of the class is present and more attention can be given. However, compromises have to be made occasionally and this sometimes affects how well children achieve. For example, in a Year 3 physical education lesson in the hall, there were too many children for them all to do floor work safely, and they had to take turns in sitting out. This limited the progress they made.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development is good. They develop in maturity and confidence as they move up through the school and, by Year 6, they are excellent ambassadors for the school. Children are very positive about the school and are clearly happy; they enjoy their lessons and have good relationships with their teachers. Most children are keen to contribute to lessons, especially the younger children, who are very enthusiastic. Older children enjoy friendly competition, for example, in physical education lessons, and they are polite and respectful to their teachers and to each other. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well in assemblies, but not all opportunities are taken to do this and, in a hymn singing practise session, the chance to develop these aspects was missed. Children of all ethnic backgrounds work and play in harmony.

Attendance is satisfactory, and improving, as the school is having success in discouraging parents from taking their children on extended leave during school time. Behaviour in lessons and conduct around school are very good, especially since space is at such a premium. Although incidents of bullying are very rare, children know what to do if they feel bullied or unhappy, and know that they will be listened to. Children say that any problems are resolved quickly. They respect and trust their teachers and support staff.

Children have a significant voice in the school and make a very positive contribution through the well-established school council and show their environmental credentials through the 'Eco-committee'. Older children welcome the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school and take these seriously. Pupils are gaining in knowledge about healthy lifestyles, recently recognised in two Healthy Schools Awards. They are encouraged to eat healthily and have easy access to drinking water, with fresh fruit available at snack times. However, their lunchtime food choices are not always as healthy as they could be and there are limited healthy food choices to be made. Pupils understand the importance of exercise and enjoy a good range of sporting activities. Children's improving attainment ensures they are preparing satisfactorily for the world of work by gaining secure basic skills. Good support is given to pupils whose first language is not English to ensure they succeed.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is of good quality. Even though the school was in the first week of the new school year when it was inspected, teachers, including those new to the school, had established good relationships with the children in their classes. Teachers waste no time in getting children down to work. Even at this early stage in the term, children had a significant amount of work within their exercise books, and teachers and children were already assessing how well they had done, and what they might do better.

Teachers and support staff work together well. The complex arrangements in the junior department to reduce class sizes in lessons work smoothly. There is a clear emphasis on teaching the basic skills in the infants, and several parents are effectively deployed to support the teaching of reading there. Several teachers have specialist skills and knowledge, and the school makes good use of these in teaching modern foreign languages, science, physical education, information and communications technology (ICT), and music. For example, when specialist teachers are covering for class teachers' preparation time, they teach to their strengths, so that children experience good quality lessons even when their regular teachers are not there.

The school's rigorous tracking procedures ensure that teachers know the levels at which children are working, and what might be expected of them. Assessment of children's work by teachers is improving and is a focus for professional development. However, not enough emphasis is currently placed on the development of their ability to work independently, to develop strategies for self-help and for supporting each other. In lessons, too many lack independence and initiative and wait passively for support from adults. This is a particular drawback when the numbers in each class are high and when children may have to wait for a considerable time.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Although the school judges its curriculum to be satisfactory overall, inspectors found it to be good. A wide range of interesting lessons are planned and effectively matched to the needs of all children. Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and there is broad and balanced provision across all subjects of the curriculum. In addition, French, German and some Spanish are taught, and sport and emotional well-being are given a particularly high profile.

Good use is made of support services, for example, to provide a bilingual assistant for the youngest children. A number of visits and visitors to school enhance the curriculum by providing different kinds of experience and opportunities to learn in different ways. This includes very popular residential activity trips and the opportunity to visit another European country. The school's ICT suite is used well by the children, and links with a local secondary school boost children's skills and knowledge in ICT when specialist teachers on loan from the secondary school teach special lessons in the ICT suite.

A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, for example, in sport and in foreign languages. An additional resource is the good quality after-school club on the premises which is run by an independent provider, although there is a low take-up of places for this. Although children are provided for well, arrangements would benefit from increased liaison between the school and the club, especially in the exchange of information about individual children.

The school promotes the government's 'Excellence and Enjoyment' initiative to broaden the range of work children undertake. This is reflected in teachers' planning to occasionally provide for whole days to be devoted to a single subject. High quality work demonstrates the success of this approach in art and design and technology. These days are particularly enjoyed by the children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are very well cared for, guided and supported. Pastoral care is an enduring strength of the school. Policies which support this, for instance, child protection and health and safety, are well established and consistently implemented by staff.

A very good partnership exists between home and school. Parents appreciate the regular communication through newsletters, and know they are welcome to come into school at any time to speak to staff about their children. The school provides regular homework and gives guidance to parents on how they can help their child with this. There is an active and well-supported parents' association which organises a range of events for the benefit of children and their families and which raises considerable funds for the school.

Children whose first language is not English benefit from the advice and support given to their parents. Good guidance and support for learning are given to pupils who need additional help in lessons. Recent provision for those who are high achievers is successful in raising their achievement to better reflect their abilities. The commitment to the development of each individual child by all staff reflects the positive and inclusive ethos of the school, and very good relationships are evident between all adults and pupils.

Although good progress has been made, academic guidance for pupils is an area of focus for the school. Children are already involved in assessing their work, but they are not told exactly what they need to achieve to move on to the next level. In addition, children are not encouraged sufficiently to be independent learners and they are too reliant on their teachers for support.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has the full confidence of staff, parents and the governing body. They fully recognise his contribution to the very good ethos of the school, and his commitment to the education and welfare of

each and every child. The governing body is capable and well informed and provides good guardianship for the school, monitoring its performance, fighting on its behalf and working well in partnership with the headteacher.

Although pastoral leadership has been highly successful for a number of years, ensuring children achieve to the best of their ability has come more recently. The school now has an experienced senior team of teachers, led by the deputy headteacher, which is raising expectations higher, improving teaching and providing full support for the headteacher. Long serving and new teachers work well together to make a unified staff. Maximum benefit is gained from the income generated by the high numbers of children to provide more teachers and support staff, and good quality resources. Some areas for development remain. For example, the leadership and management of subjects are not as advanced as they could be. Although key development plans are comprehensive and thorough, they are not organised in such a way as to focus sharply on raising standards and quality and deciding whether action makes a positive difference to the children.

The school's leadership is aware of nearly all its strengths and areas where it needs to improve. It has a generally accurate view of achievement and the quality of what the school provides, and this aligned closely to the inspection judgements.

The school is well placed to improve further because of the increasing effectiveness of leadership and management and the commitment of teachers to improvement. Fresh challenges are emerging. The school is increasingly popular with parents of Pakistani heritage, and some children enter with poorer English. The leadership is responding well by actively seeking outside help and working with schools in similar circumstances. The problem of accommodating all the children who want to come to the school is being tackled energetically by the headteacher and governing body.



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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, we visited your school recently and looked at all the things you do. We enjoyed our two days and would like to thank you for your help. We were impressed with how well you behaved and how proud you are of your school.

We're sure you would like to know what we thought about your school, so here are some of our views.

- The teachers make lessons interesting for you, and there are lots of extra activities for you to do, like the trips and the after-school clubs.
- The teaching is good so that you do well in your work. If you find lessons difficult, you get lots of help from the adults and are given the right work to do. Some of you are given more difficult work and you enjoy the challenge.
- We were very impressed with the way your school takes care of each one of you and of how it works with your parents to help you to be confident and happy while you are learning.
- You get along well with each other and with the adults in school. You are learning to become responsible and caring citizens: your school council gave us proof of that.
- You are learning to take good care of the environment. You are also learning to take good care of yourselves, to take exercise and eat healthily, although you don't always make good choices about what you eat at lunchtime.
- We know that you sometimes wish the numbers of children in every class could be smaller so that you are able to have more individual attention from your teachers. Your headteacher and governors are doing their very best to make sure your education does not suffer and to improve matters, and we think it is important they should carry on trying, so as to safeguard what is good about the school.
- To help you achieve even better, your teachers should show you how to do more things on your own, and to encourage you to use your initiative more. You can help by trying to do more of your work alone or with other children at your table instead of waiting to see the teacher every time you think you may need help.

Thank you again for being so polite and friendly.