



St George's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106248
Local Authority Tameside
Inspection number 277518
Inspection dates 18–19 October 2006
Reporting inspector Garry Jones HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stamford Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Mossley, Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL5 0HT
Age range of pupils	3–11	Telephone number	01457 832496
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Fax number	01457 832496
Number on roll (school)	164	Chair	Barbara Anderton
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Carolyn Divers
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school serving the community of Mossley, although a significant proportion of children travel from neighbouring communities. There are a small number of pupils from minority ethnic heritage who also have English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but the proportion with statements of special educational needs is above the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school is providing a satisfactory quality of education for all its pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, which represents satisfactory value for money. This is an inclusive school where pupils are happy, feel safe and enjoy their education. The majority of pupils attend school regularly, behave well and are keen to learn. Pupils talk enthusiastically to visitors about their work and express strong commitment to their school. They speak warmly about the good support and care they receive from their teachers and other adults. There is a clear focus on supporting pupils to develop socially and an effective emphasis on their spiritual and moral development. The overwhelming majority of parents are pleased with the provision in the school.

Pupils attain average standards in their work. However, there are significant variations in results between different year groups; for example, attainment at Key Stage 2 in 2005 was good, but results in national tests fell significantly in 2006. This inconsistency in results reflects the small size of the cohorts and the variation in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Achievement overall is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the majority of lessons as a result of satisfactory teaching. However, there is insufficient use of a range of approaches, including independent learning, to allow all pupils to achieve well. When teaching is good pupils make good progress. The guidance that pupils receive to improve their attainment is sound with clear targets for improvement in English and mathematics and helpful comments in the marking of their work.

The curriculum is satisfactory in that it meets the needs of all pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage, and fulfils the statutory requirements. The teaching of Spanish is an innovation which widens the experience of the pupils and they enthusiastically join in with activities in these lessons. Pupils greatly value the good opportunities to participate in clubs and visits.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher has correctly identified areas for improvement, but has yet to refine the school improvement plan to make it a more useful document. There is a correct focus on raising attainment and achievement while maintaining the emphasis on personal development. A range of good initiatives to improve teaching and to match activities to the individual needs of the pupils are now in place. The school and the governing body know the strengths of the school well. The self-evaluation was informed by the views of parents and children and the analysis of strengths and weaknesses was sound. However, some of the grades were over optimistic. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory. Strategies are in place to bring about improvement but it is too early to judge their success.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good by increasing the range of strategies to meet the needs of all abilities.
- Increase the number of opportunities for independent learning.

- Revise the school improvement plan to make it a more useful tool for managing change and monitoring progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall standards are satisfactory. The achievement of pupils is in line with the national average in 2005 and data provided by the local authority illustrates that this is also the case in 2006. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are, generally, slightly below those found nationally, although given the small cohorts there is considerable variation from year-to-year. While standards in Key Stage 1 are in line with those found nationally, the results in the assessments in writing fell significantly in 2006. The results of the Key Stage 2 tests have been in line with the national average since 2001. However, in 2005 attainment in the Key Stage 2 tests were significantly above the national average overall and particularly in mathematics and science. Results declined in 2006 but this reflected the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need in a very small cohort. There is no significant variation in the achievement of any particular groups of pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, are good. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes soon learn the routines of the school and work and play together well. Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in regular attendance. Pupils behave well in lessons and are keen to learn. They feel safe in the playground. A few, however, mentioned the aggressive behaviour of a small number of older boys, a concern also reflected by one or two parents. Pupils themselves are confident that the school is dealing with this issue. They know how to lead healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe, pointing out, for example, the healthy foods in their lunchboxes. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through fulfilling a range of responsibilities. The school council is particularly proud of its work in promoting a 'green' school. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the future by establishing a foundation of basic skills. Pupils have few opportunities to develop work-related skills, although they organise their own fundraising for a charity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, but there is some good teaching and a very small proportion that is unsatisfactory. Teachers set clear learning objectives for pupils and carefully plan a range of interesting activities that engage the pupils in

their learning and maintain pace. However, in some lessons pupils are prevented from making good progress by the use of tasks that do not sufficiently match the abilities of all. Pupils are well aware of what is expected of them and are able to talk about their work and their targets for improvement in literacy and in mathematics. Pupils are supported to make satisfactory progress in lessons through effective questioning by their teacher and targeted support from teaching assistants. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and to develop their investigative skills particularly in science.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes and for pupils in the older classes is satisfactory. In the Nursery and Reception classes, the curriculum is securely based on government recommendations and is carefully planned to help children to reach their goals. The curriculum for older pupils has been redesigned very recently to meet the challenges of mixed-age classes and is to be kept under continual review. At the moment, it ensures that all the required subjects are taught with a due emphasis on literacy and numeracy. There is a good range of popular clubs outside lesson times, including one for infant pupils. The curriculum is made more enjoyable and relevant by a good range of visits to places of educational interest. It is enriched by the inclusion of Spanish and the use of specialist staff to deliver sports and creative arts. Pupils learn how to be healthy and to keep safe in lessons and during visits from relevant organisations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and a key factor in ensuring a good level of personal development and well-being for all. All adults in the school are committed to helping pupils to flourish in a caring, Christian environment. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and welfare are in place. The school has awards from the local authority for promoting physical activity and emotional health. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are looked after well and this helps their personal and social development, as well as other areas of their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are also supported well in working towards their targets by members of staff and outside agencies. As a result, they make similar progress to their classmates. The school has started to keep detailed records of pupils' progress towards achieving their targets as the basis for raising achievement, but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The newly appointed headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the school and has laid solid foundations for

improvement. She is aware that the current school improvement plan requires further development to effectively prioritise whole-school initiatives and to provide a clear basis for monitoring progress. She has acted promptly to strengthen the procedures for monitoring teaching and learning within the school and to extend the role of subject coordinators in this work. The subject coordinators are beginning to make a real contribution to improvement. The headteacher has correctly identified raising standards and achievement, particularly literacy in Key Stage 1, as areas for improvement and has introduced a range of appropriate intervention strategies. However, it is too early to fully assess the impact of this work. The process of self-evaluation was satisfactory and took account of the views of all stakeholders, including parents and governors. The analysis of strengths and weaknesses was sound; however, a few of the grades were over optimistic. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and is supportive of the school, monitoring performance and contributing to self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The chair of governors knows the strengths of the school well and is aware that further training is needed to ensure that the full governing body actively monitors performance and challenges the school to improve further.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

You may remember that Mr Martin and I visited your school just before the half-term holiday. Thank you for being so helpful and friendly while we were finding out how well the school is doing.

We think your school is a satisfactory school and we were impressed by a number of things. Here are some of the particularly positive things we noticed:

- you behave well and you are interested in your lessons
- your teachers and the other adults in school take good care of you, so you feel safe and well looked after
- there is a good range of clubs and you get the opportunity to visit interesting places that help you to learn.

There are a few ways in which we think that your school can be made even better. We have asked the teachers to:

- make sure that they plan lessons that help you all to learn as well as you can
- give you enough opportunities to learn on your own.

We have also asked the school to make sure that its plan for the future is more useful in helping improvement.

You can help by carrying on listening to your teachers and doing your best all of the time.