

# Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104821
<b>Local Authority</b>	St. Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	287043
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gordon Allison

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	222
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev L Twist
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Ian Rimmer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 July 2001
<b>School address</b>	Govett Road St Helens Merseyside WA9 5NH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678400
<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678402

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school serves an area where the socio-economic circumstances are below average. Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities(LDD) is above average. The number claiming free school meals is also above average. The school has the Healthy Schools award and Activemark as well as the local authority kitemark for the Foundation Stage.

## 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 and it gives good value for money. All pupils flourish in the calm, secure and happy atmosphere which stems from the headteacher's clear vision for the school. All pupils are valued and given opportunities to be included in all aspects of school life. As a result the school's central aim of encouraging pupils to do their best everywhere is met successfully.

Pupils develop well during their time at the school because of the good teaching and wide range of curriculum experiences that the school provides. As a result pupils enjoy school and understand the importance of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to help others at all times. As a result, politeness and good behaviour is the norm. Pupils have a growing knowledge of other cultures. Pupils develop a good understanding of how people should be treated. Pupils give much back to the wider community through, for instance, fundraising for charity.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and thorough monitoring of their progress. Pupils enter the school with low standards. In fact, they are well below average in communication and social skills. They make very good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the excellent teaching and the effective use of good resources, which includes an excellent outdoor area. Standards at the end of Year 2 have risen because of the strategies and support the school has put into place. By the time pupils leave Year 6 standards are broadly average, which represents good progress given their starting point. Indeed there has been consistent improvement in the progress pupils make in the past three years. In 2006, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 was lower than the national average. The overall good progress and positive attitudes of the pupils mean that the vast majority are well prepared for future schooling and later life.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are enthusiastic and this transmits itself to the pupils who respond well to the thoroughly prepared lessons. Teachers and learning assistants provide good support for pupils with(LDD) which enables them to make good progress. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is always supportive. However, in Years 3 to 6 especially, there is some inconsistency in the way written comments in books tell the pupils specifically what they should do to improve their work.

Curriculum provision is good. It is well designed and planned to meet the needs of all children and to challenge them appropriately. Good links have been made between subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and adapted in the light of information from pupil attainment tests.

Care, guidance and support are good. Teachers know pupils very well. Pupils appreciate their friendliness and help they provide. Relationships with outside agencies are strong. Attendance is slightly below average; the recently improved strategies have provided more rigour to improve attendance, but it is too early to fully assess its impact.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is passionate about ensuring all pupils meet their potential. He provides clear, strong and visionary leadership. He is well supported by a knowledgeable governing body whose involvement in the school and evaluating its progress has improved since the previous inspection. Self evaluation is strong which enables the school to set appropriate, measurable school improvement targets.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics and science.
- Ensure that all pupils attend more regularly.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 consistently gives clear points for improvement.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

In 2006 overall progress from Year 2 to Year 6 placed the school in the top 25% of all schools. Above average progress was made in mathematics, science and English; this subject being the strongest performer being ranked in the top 15%. Standards, when children enter the Foundation Stage are low: in fact well below average in communication and social skills. Children are helped to settle quickly and make very good progress. As a result, when pupils enter Year 1 many have reached the goals set for their learning. Test results at the end of Year 2 improved in 2006, with reading improving the most, because of the introduction of an effective action plan to improve standards.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. This has been the pattern in national tests in recent years although in 2005 they were significantly above average. In 2006 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 was lower than the national average. The school quickly identified the reasons for this and took swift action to remedy the problems. Pupils with LDD make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Their progress is also well monitored so that appropriate intervention is put into place.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The strong, caring and family ethos enables pupils to feel secure and valued, and this effectively promotes their confidence as learners. They develop good moral awareness through the many opportunities they are given to think and reflect on real life issues. As a result, politeness and good behaviour are the norm. Good provision has ensured that pupils know how to live healthy lives and stay safe. For example, they talk about road safety, stranger danger and safe use of the Internet. Good awareness of other cultures is evident in the colourful and effective displays throughout the school. Pupils demonstrate good citizenship skills through the work of the school council and a willingness to accept responsibility. For example, they give good support to others in their roles as play leaders and reading buddies. Opportunities such as these help to prepare pupils for the future through developing negotiation skills, recognition of the value of money and how their work can benefit others. Closer monitoring has been introduced this year to further improve the slightly below average attendance, but the results of this have yet to be seen.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Effective teaching is characterised by good, detailed planning which concentrates on learning objectives so pupils know what they are to learn. This is reviewed and reinforced regularly so

that any lack of understanding is followed up. Pupils learn well because they are actively involved and enjoy what they do; as one said, 'Lessons are fun.' Teachers are able to support pupils effectively because they have good subject knowledge. They are developing mind-friendly learning so that they are able to match their teaching to the best way that each pupil learns. Interactive whiteboards are used well by teachers and pupils to demonstrate points visually. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well for research and to enhance the work covered by identified groups of pupils, such as those who are gifted and talented. Pupils who require extra support are served well by an effective team of teaching assistants and make good progress. In the Foundation Stage pupils make very good progress in literacy and numeracy because of the rigorous yet enjoyable methods used by the teachers. At its best the marking of pupils' work is regular, thorough and contains specific points for improvement for each pupil to follow. However, such practice is inconsistent, especially in Years 3 to 6, and this tends to slow down the progress of some pupils. Homework is set regularly and is enabling pupils to develop skills as independent learners.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good curriculum with some significant strengths. Provision is very good in the Foundation Stage with many opportunities for children to learn through exploration and to develop independence. Extra-curricular provision is strong with a good range of activities on offer before and after school. Sport is promoted particularly well through these. Some good links have been made between subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. For example, art and design and technology work is linked to a history topic on Egyptians. Innovative thinking by the school has provided particularly good enrichment from other providers in art, dance, music and drama which pupils enjoy immensely. There are also very good opportunities for pupils from Reception upwards to learn a modern foreign language. A good range of additional strategies is in place to support pupils with particular gifts and talents, for example, the most able in science as well as those who find learning more difficult. While there are a number of strengths in the mathematics and science curriculum some aspects are rightly being reviewed to ensure that pupils are quicker, and more successful, in solving problems that require mental manipulation of numbers.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is strong. As one pupil said 'Teachers help you if you're stuck - they tell you step by step so you understand.' Child protection, safeguarding and health and safety measures are all in place. The school is vigilant in this area. The progress and well-being of vulnerable pupils is tracked and monitored closely. Pupils with LDD are clearly identified and have clear individual plans which are regularly monitored. Links with outside agencies, such as the behaviour support services, are strong and have a good impact. All pupils have clear academic targets. They know the levels at which they are working and how to get to the next level. Good dialogue takes place between pupils and teachers on this. Pupils are becoming increasingly involved in assessing aspects of their own learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher is proactive and remains committed to ensuring continued improvement. In this he is well supported by the deputy headteacher. The recently developed senior leadership team is beginning to have a positive impact. The capacity for further improvement is therefore good. Regular and accurate evaluation is part of the school culture and effective action has been taken in many areas. Teaching and learning is well monitored through regular analysis of assessment data, accurate lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work. Good support is provided to all staff to improve their teaching skills. Development planning is secure and is related closely to ensuring improvements for every pupil. Resources are allocated effectively to specific priorities. For example, the development of a very good outdoor play area for the Foundation Stage has contributed to the very good progress made by those pupils. Governors are very supportive of the school and are well informed. They effectively question, and hold to account, the management of the school.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School, Govett Road, St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 5NH.

Mrs D'Arcy and I are most grateful for the kindness, cooperation and welcome we received when we visited your good school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work, listening to what you thought of the school and seeing you work hard and enjoy your lessons. I have made a list below of the main things we found out about your school.

What we really liked about your school:

- the good progress you make, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, as you move through the school
- your politeness, how you help others and your good behaviour
- the way you learn to play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy
- the way you help other people through what you do for charity
- how you take responsibility and make a good contribution to the running of the school
- the good teaching
- the strong leadership and management of the headteacher.

There are some improvements that need to be made and these will be achieved if you all give your full support to them. Some of you will need to improve your attendance so that you do not miss out on the good opportunities that the school provides. You need to aim to get the highest grades you can, especially in mathematics and science, by doing your best work and listening carefully to the advice your teachers give to you. I have asked your teachers to make sure that in Years 3 to 6 all of you get comments in your books that will tell you clearly what you need to do to improve your work.

Good luck for the future,