



# South Failsworth Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105656  
**Local Authority** Oldham  
**Inspection number** 287287  
**Inspection dates** 29–30 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Colin Smith

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 address</b>	Paddock Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Failsworth, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire M35 0NY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 6816351
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	466	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 6843135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Peter Kershaw
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Michael Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 February 2001		

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much larger than average in size. Although the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average, the area served by the school is mixed, socially and economically. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are of Caribbean or Black British heritage or from mixed backgrounds. None of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school's effectiveness and the value for money provided are good. The determination of teachers and support staff to remove any barriers to learning is evident in the kind, patient and understanding way in which pupils are treated. In particular, the extent to which the most vulnerable children are safeguarded and supported, emotionally and academically, is outstanding and accounts for their excellent progress. A significant emphasis is placed on providing a calm, purposeful environment in which pupils can learn. The exemplary level of care and support and good guidance provided, with encouragement for pupils to evaluate and improve their own learning, are major factors influencing their good progress and good personal development. Pupils are considerate, well behaved, happy and responsible learners who understand the importance of healthy and safe lifestyles. Their experiences in school prepare them very well for the future. Parents universally appreciate what the school provides. In the words of one parent, 'Academic standards are good but children's personal development is regarded as equally important.'

On the whole pupils achieve well. Children get off to a flying start, because of the good teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception unit. Standards are above average overall by the end of Key Stage 1 and are well above average in mathematics and science by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in English are above average. However, results in writing have historically not been as good as in reading. Concerted action to improve the teaching of writing is paying dividends. Pupils are learning quickly how to craft their writing to make it appealing to the reader. Consequently, the attainment gap between reading and writing is closing rapidly in Key Stage 2. However, in Key Stage 1, improvements in writing are being held back by the overuse of worksheets, which do not inspire and challenge the pupils to write with feeling and enjoyment, particularly for the more able. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) though improving, are still not good enough in the aspects of modelling, control and data handling.

Teaching and learning are mainly good with some excellent features in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6 and some insufficiently challenging elements in Years 1 and 2. The good curriculum, enhanced by a rich selection of additional activities, creates enjoyment and fulfilment for all pupils. Good leadership and management ensure that the work of the school is kept under review. The headteacher, staff and governors have a very good appreciation of what the school is doing well and where improvement is needed. The findings of the inspection confirm that the school's self-evaluation is accurate in every area. Key leaders show energy and determination in improving the school, physically and educationally. This is why good improvements have been made since the previous inspection and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater challenge for the more able pupils and more opportunities for all pupils to write at length in order to increase achievement in English in Key Stage 1.
- Improve pupils' skills in modelling, control and data handling to raise standards in ICT.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with attainment typical for their age. They make good progress. By the end of Reception, their attainment is higher than expected. The dip in results in Key Stage 1 and 2 in 2005, caused by an unusually high number of pupils with learning and emotional difficulties, was uncharacteristic. Prior to that, results had been significantly above average and the 2006 results are the school's best for several years. Infant pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics, although some of the more able ones do not make enough progress in writing. Junior pupils achieve well overall, although in the past, progress in reading has been better than in writing. Setting challenging targets and teaching pupils how to evaluate and improve their written work is driving up standards. Older pupils' written work is now bristling with colourful phrases such as 'I heard the howling of a black, vicious, cold blooded wolf.' Boys and girls, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities those from minority ethnic groups achieve equally well and the most vulnerable ones make excellent progress. Standards in some aspects of ICT are not high enough, although pupils' word processing skills are secure and they have a good understanding of how to retrieve information from the Internet.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good behaviour, above average attendance and enthusiasm for learning. The look of delight on the faces of Nursery children up to their elbows in 'gloop' (cornflower and water) illustrates just how exciting learning is. Pupils are proud of their school. They say they feel special 'because of the kindness shown by staff and children'. They greatly value opportunities to express their views and are eagerly planning improvements to the school grounds. Pupils' social, moral and spiritual development is good. Pupils disapprove of bullying and are respectful of other cultures, although their understanding of diversity is limited by not having visited different faith centres. Pupils' self-esteem is nurtured well. Consequently, they grow in confidence and show exceptional maturity in working with partners and in teams. Involvement in devising rules ensures that they develop a keen sense of responsibility for themselves and others. Pupils' good awareness of healthy and safe lifestyles is recognised in the achievement of the 'Healthy School's award. Opportunities to improve their good literacy and numeracy skills through business enterprises prepare them well for the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The meticulous planning of stimulating activities and precise teaching of basic skills ensure that Nursery and Reception children learn very successfully. In all classes, the atmosphere for learning is good. Pupils are well managed and give of their best. A good variety of approaches, such as investigations and projecting ICT images on large screens, capture pupils' interests and enhance their understanding. Asking pairs of pupils to share and jot down their ideas is having a major impact on achievement in writing. The use of assessment to measure how well pupils are learning is well developed. In the best lessons, largely in the Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6, teachers use the information very well to provide a high level of challenge. This enables all pupils to learn effectively. In an excellent writing lesson in Year 6, for example, the teacher's very high expectations and highly skilled questioning inspired pupils to write intriguing descriptions of a 'deep dark wood'. Teaching in the infant classes is not always sufficiently challenging to extend the learning of the more able pupils. This is particularly noticeable when too much emphasis is placed on accuracy and not enough on creativity in writing.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The exciting Foundation Stage curriculum captures children's imagination from the outset. Throughout the school key literacy and numeracy skills, such as phonics and mathematical calculation, are strongly emphasised. Pupils are taught how to use these skills to aid learning in other subjects. This is a good investment for the future and crucial to their personal development. The exception is ICT, where technical difficulties are preventing pupils from using computers as a tool for learning. The variety of interesting activities provided in and out of school, such as sport, learning French and exploring creative activities in 'Golden Time', prompt pupils to say 'We learn something new every day.' The curriculum is largely well matched to pupils' needs, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The needs of the older gifted and talented pupils are being increasingly well catered for through writing, sports and arts clubs, although less so for younger pupils, particularly in writing. An effective personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils learn to make informed choices.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The excellent partnership between staff, parents and health professionals ensures that any barriers to learning caused by disability or emotional or learning difficulties are successfully removed. The inclusion leader and support staff are highly successful in helping the most vulnerable pupils to achieve as well as they possibly can. Governors

and staff ensure that school buildings are safe, children are protected and staff are recruited carefully. A good level of guidance is provided to help pupils to learn and develop personally. The targets set are well understood by pupils. Although pointers for improvement are not always evident when their work is marked, older pupils are developing a unique talent for assessing and improving their own written work. Very good home-school relationships enable parents to support their children's learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher and senior leadership team bring a blend of sensitivity and determination to the school. Governors, senior staff, teachers and support staff share the same vision, devise meaningful action plans and pull together to maintain the successes and improve areas requiring attention. This is why achievement in writing is improving in junior classes and ICT is receiving urgent attention. Good leadership at all levels is evident in the organisation of the Foundation Stage, the coordination of special needs provision and the management of subjects. Teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are closely monitored. An effective tracking system ensures that whenever pupils' progress falters, additional support is provided to boost their learning. However, senior staff recognise that the tracking system does not monitor sufficiently closely the progress of groups of pupils, such as the more able ones, as they move from one class to the next. The use of ICT is currently being introduced to make the task easier and to strengthen the link between pupils' progress and the performance of teachers. There is a strong belief that pupils learn successfully within a positive and trusting atmosphere. Consequently, the needs of individuals are taken very seriously. Parents very much appreciate the efforts made by staff to make their children's learning interesting and successful. In the view of one parent, but representative of many, 'The dedication of the staff has a very positive effect upon children's achievement and their personal development.'

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	2
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	2
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.

## 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

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school, answering our questions so helpfully and showing us your best work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit.

You, and your parents, are correct in believing that South Failsworth Primary is a good school. Good teaching helps you to learn successfully, make good progress and reach high standards, particularly in mathematics and science. In the past, your progress in English has not been quite as good. The school has found it more difficult to help you improve your achievement in writing to match the other subjects. However, we were delighted to find that your headteacher, class teachers and support staff have been working very hard to make writing more interesting and exciting for you. We watched the older pupils in lessons and could see the improvements taking place.

Your school is well led and managed. The staff are very caring, not only about your learning, but also about how well you develop as good citizens. All those extra lessons, out-of-school activities and opportunities to find out about leading healthy and safe lifestyles are proving very worthwhile. Your good behaviour and attendance, enjoyment in learning and care for others is very noticeable. In particular, the children who need most help are looked after and supported extremely well by staff and other children.

We have only two recommendations to help to make your school even better.

- Instead of giving infant children more worksheets to complete, we want teachers to encourage them to write more in their own words. You older ones can help by showing the younger ones how to use 'juicy' and interesting words.
- You all need more opportunities and good teaching of how to use computers for data handling, control and modelling to raise standards in ICT. Practising these new skills at school and on your home computers will help you to catch up more quickly.