



Parochial CofE Primary and Nursery School,  
Ashton-under-Lyne

Inspection Report

Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 106230  
**Local Authority** Tameside  
**Inspection number** 287451  
**Inspection dates** 22–23 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Brian Sharples HMI

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>	Keppel Street
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Ashton-under-Lyne
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire OL6 6NN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3436070
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	200	<b>Fax number</b>	0106 3437846
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Marianne Clarke
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Marjorie Gillespy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 March 2003		

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Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	22–23 February 2007	287451

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## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Parochial school is a slightly below average sized school. The pupils come from several local wards which have a wide variety of social and economic backgrounds. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is around the national average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and with English as an additional language is above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) including statements of special educational need is slightly below national averages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. When one enters the school there is automatically a feeling of friendliness, warmth and a caring atmosphere which contributes to the truly Christian ethos which permeates the school. Pupils are cheerful, polite and enjoy being at the school. As one parent said, 'My children love going to school and have certainly developed considerably since attending Parochial school.' The care, guidance and support that staff provides for pupils are good. The majority of pupils feel safe and secure in the school knowing that any problems will be sorted out quickly by teachers.

The overall quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory, with some elements of good practice. Teachers are liked and respected by the pupils. The quality of lesson planning and the use of assessment data to inform planning vary across year groups and subjects. It is good in the Foundation Stage and in English. Teachers set targets for pupils to achieve but these are not always challenging enough for the middle attaining pupils, particularly in Years 1 to 4. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 know their targets and, more importantly, know what they have to do to improve even further.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Management is good and children learn from a good mix of direct teaching and well-planned opportunities for independent learning. Consequently, they achieve well, reaching, and in some cases exceeding, the expectations for their age. As pupils move through Years 1 to 6 they make satisfactory progress and overall standards of attainment are satisfactory by the end of Year 6. However, standards are below average in science because teachers take too much control over how pupils plan and carry out their investigations, which limits their progress and ability to think creatively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they have good, additional support and their individual targets are precisely matched to their learning needs.

The pupils are proud of their school and are keen to fully participate in its life. This is reflected in the satisfactory and improving levels of attendance and the very good behaviour around the school. They have an important voice through the Eco Council, questionnaires and weekly 'Celebration' assemblies. Pupils have made several suggestions for improving the school. For example, they had a big say in the design and decision making over the creation of the 'Eco Garden'. Pupils are making a positive contribution to the school and local community. The school does some good work in developing the wider aspects of pupils' lives including their social, spiritual, moral, and cultural awareness. For example, opportunities for spiritual and cultural awareness exist across the curriculum through subjects including music, art and games.

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory, although it is good on the part of the headteacher and governors. Contributions from other tiers of management are not yet consistently good. There are some satisfactory systems in place for identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the school and putting these

into development plans. However, this process needs to become sharper so that progress and judgements can be made more accurately.

To date, the headteacher and governors have worked hard to ensure that there has been at least satisfactory progress against most of the issues raised in the previous inspection. However, little impact has been made into the concern over standards in science. This remains a priority for the school. The school offers satisfactory value for money. Given the qualities and mix of personnel and progress made to date, the capacity to improve further is satisfactory.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and improve achievement throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment to plan lessons that more accurately meet the learning needs of all pupils.
- Improve teachers' understanding of how pupils acquire and apply investigative skills in science.
- Sharpen the monitoring and self-evaluation process so that all those interested in the school are clear about its strengths, weaknesses and rate of progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children enter the Foundation Stage with average levels of skills expected for their age. Due to good teaching and an interesting curriculum they make good progress, particularly in learning how to make choices independently and in learning the sounds of letters. These skills stand them in good stead in preparation for entry into Year 1. Standards in English and mathematics are average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave school. However, the middle attaining groups of pupils are not achieving to their full potential. Standards in science are below average and pupils' progress is just satisfactory in this subject. This is because science work is too teacher-led and pupils do not have enough opportunities to make choices on how to construct or conduct their own investigations.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress throughout the school. Not only do they receive additional, well-informed support from well qualified learning assistants, but their progress against meeting the challenging, yet achievable targets on their individual education plans is measured accurately, prior to further targets being set.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They get on very well with each other and form good relationships. Pupils are thoughtful, caring and polite to one another and staff. The

great majority of pupils enjoy their time at school. As one said, 'It's a very good school because lessons are enjoyable.' This is seen in the improved attendance levels which are now in line with national averages. Overall, the behaviour in and around school is very good and this is the opinion held by the vast majority of parents. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and say that they feel safe in school. There are very few instances of bullying, but if they happen, they are dealt with effectively by teachers. However, a small number of parents expressed concern over this issue, particularly with lunchtime occurrences. The school has plans in place to address these concerns.

Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, shown through the nutritious choices at lunchtime and the availability of fresh fruit and healthy drinks at break time. The pupils' healthy lifestyles are further developed through the excellent 'Sportslink' initiative organised through the local authority. Pupils are developing into good citizens. Older pupils take on wider responsibilities including the 'playground buddy' role at break and lunchtimes. Pupils understand their role in the whole-school and local community and have many opportunities to contribute to this aspect of their learning. For example, through fund raising activities, charitable work and environmental projects, all of which provide opportunities for involvement in the school or local community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage where teachers plan imaginative themed work. This work catches children's interest and successfully 'joins up' different aspects of learning through a good balance of taught and independent learning activities. For example, between learning about living creatures, how to care for them, art and counting.

An effective pupil tracking system is being used by staff in English and mathematics to measure pupils' progress and identify those in danger of underachieving. This is beginning to be used well and shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress overall. Teachers' planning is best in English where planned tasks for different groups of pupils are based on accurate assessments of what they need to learn next to raise standards further. Unfortunately this use of assessment to inform planning is not carried through as effectively in mathematics and science. In mathematics planning is satisfactory, but sometimes planned exercises are needlessly repetitive for the average pupils. Teachers' understanding of how pupils' acquire investigative skills in science is insecure. As a result almost all investigations are designed, led and managed by teachers. Pupil recording is too guided and this is restricting the most capable pupils' learning in science.

Teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to focus pupils' attention on their learning, particularly at the beginning of lessons. Computers are used well in a variety of ways to enhance teaching and learning in many different subjects. Relationships

between staff and pupils are good. Teachers' marking and annotation of pupils work is satisfactory. Where it is used well, it helps pupils know how to improve their work. One pupil said, 'It helps when they write notes about how to improve your work.' This again is best in English, where pointers on how pupils can improve further are more specific than in mathematics or science.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and includes a good focus on children's planned outdoor education, whatever the weather. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is also good. It is broad, balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The school has successfully maintained a sharp focus on the arts and sports, leading to good achievement in these subjects. In addition, the school has introduced Spanish and teachers plan interesting links between different subjects, for example between information and communication technology, history, art and English, which provide pupils with opportunities to use the skills acquired in one subject to learn new facts in another. This is beginning to raise standards. Through work in science and personal and social development, pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, fit and healthy. They are encouraged to take responsibility and interest in their own school and local community, such as improving the school grounds or involvement with the local hospice. Pupils experience a wide range of visitors and visits which enrich their learning. Extra-curricular activities include a range of sporting clubs and choir, although older pupils are disappointed that they do not have a residential visit and would like more clubs, 'Like chess or maths'. The curriculum is adapted well to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good support and guidance for pupils. The care provided by all staff for pupils is outstanding and is a real strength of the school. Good working systems are in place that impact well on pupils' personal development and well-being and staff provide good role models for pupils to follow. For example, staff support pupils in their healthy eating and continually reinforce safe practice and procedures. Procedures for child protection and risk assessment are rigorous and meet all statutory requirements. The learning support assistant and teaching assistants are very effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The dedication and hard work of these staff and a wide range of intervention and support strategies ensure that pupils receive a good level of support and care. This group of pupils makes good progress by the time they leave school. Teachers thoroughly analyse and assess each pupil's work and ability levels on entry into the Foundation Stage. They continue to assess pupils regularly as they move through the school. However, the way in which teacher records and assessments are used to support pupils, set targets and inform planning varies between year groups.

Pupils are well prepared for starting their move to secondary school. The school has established several good links with the feeder high schools and provides pupils with a good set of information. One group of pupils commented, 'We feel well prepared'. Links with other external agencies including educational welfare, health service and psychologists are strong.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, with some good features. A particular strength is the leadership and drive provided by the headteacher, who is totally committed to the welfare and achievement of all pupils. Unfortunately this effort and enthusiasm is not matched consistently by staff in higher levels of management, where support and contributions vary from satisfactory to weak.

The school development plan and subject plans effectively identify those areas for improvement needed to move the school forward. However, they need to be sharper in the way they allow governors and staff to measure and monitor progress. The school has introduced some satisfactory systems for quality assuring progress across all aspects of the school's work. All staff and governors are involved in the process of evaluating the school's effectiveness. There are regular reports to governors, and subject leaders review their subject each term. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory but there are several areas where inspectors disagree with the school's judgements. Leadership and management, teaching and learning and care, guidance and support are not as good as the school judges because standards and achievement are satisfactory rather than good. The competence of subject leaders is developing but is still variable across the school. They monitor their subject termly through the scrutiny of lesson plans and pupils' work but are not yet involved in lesson observations.

The headteacher ensures that all safeguarding procedures are in place and followed correctly. The way in which all staff and governors promote the care and well-being of the pupils is a real strength of the school. Links with parents and the wider community are good. Responses from parents through the inspection questionnaire show that the overwhelming majority of them are happy with the way the school is run. One parent commented: 'We are always kept informed about our child's progress and the teachers and assistants go out of their way to update us about our child's development.'

The governing body has established good procedures to ensure that their duties and responsibilities are covered well and that they take an active part in the life of the school. Efforts by school leaders and managers have resulted in satisfactory progress against the issues raised at the previous inspection. However, insufficient progress has been made in solving the concern over science. Given the progress made to date, the school provides satisfactory value for money and satisfactory capacity for further improvement.



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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>	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	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	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	1
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<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>	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	3
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	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. We really enjoyed the chance to talk with you about your work and to listen to what you think about your school. We have decided that Parochial School is a satisfactory school with some good aspects. We also found out that you, along with the teachers, parents and governors are all proud of the school and are working hard to see it become even better.

What we liked most about your school

- The way that the young children are given a good start to school in the Nursery and Foundation classes.
- The way that Mrs Gillespy and the governors are trying hard to see the school do even better.
- The range of experiences you have to help your learning.
- The different things that help you to lead healthy lives.
- The way that all the adults guide and care for you and want to see that you come to no harm. This helps create the caring feeling which is all around the school.
- Your good behaviour, polite manners and the respect that you show around school.
- The interest that you show in lessons and the way that you enjoy learning.
- The way that you feel safe around school and enjoy being there.

What we have asked your school to do now

- We want the school to make sure that all bits of teaching are good all the time, especially in things like setting your targets and making sure all your needs are met.
- Some of you are not doing as well as you could. We want the school to help you do better in English, mathematics and science.
- The governors and subject leaders need to make sure that they are always watching how well the school is doing.
- You need to be given more chance to solve problems for yourself in science lessons.

I hope you are pleased with the things we have said about your school and are proud of what you, your staff, governors and parents have achieved so far. We very much enjoyed our time with you.