

# Milton St John's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106234
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	287452
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 February 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Toft 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 category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs N Dallas
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Card
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Mill Lane Mossley Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL5 0BN
<b>Telephone number</b>	01457 832572
<b>Fax number</b>	01457 832572

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## Introduction

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

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the quality of teaching and learning; the impact of assessment on learning and standards; and developments in the Foundation Stage. The inspector gathered evidence from observing lessons, talking to staff and pupils, scrutinising pupils' work and staff records, and reading the school's policy and evaluation documents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but there is no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school caters for boys and girls aged 3 to 11 mainly from the small town of Mossley. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and all speak English as their first language. A new extension for the Foundation Stage is nearing completion.

## 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 with some outstanding features. It has improved steadily in recent years and has excellent capacity to improve even further. It is understandably very popular with parents. The great majority praise the school's performance, particularly in: the care and guidance given to their children; the strong and interesting teaching and curriculum; and the commitment and approachability of the headteacher and staff. The pupils very much enjoy their education and participate well in the wide range of activities provided. The staff monitor closely the pupils' response to the provision and the school goes to some lengths to gauge their opinions and those of the parents. Communications with parents and the local community are good.

Pupils enter the school in the Nursery with average attainment. This is accurately diagnosed through the school's very precise assessment procedures, a precision which continues to be a feature throughout the year groups. Good and consistent progress is made by all groups of pupils as they move through the school, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, each of whom receives carefully chosen support. As a result standards are above average in the core subjects by the end of Year 6, as indicated in the national test results. In addition, there is ample evidence, for example, in the vibrant displays of pupils' work, of high attainment in other subjects and extra-curricular activities. This reflects the excellent broad and balanced curriculum, together with the very wide range of extra-curricular activities, outside visits and special projects carried out periodically throughout the year.

Pupils learn well throughout the school. This reflects the quality of teaching which is good with some excellent features. Members of staff use a range of teaching methods very effectively to engage the pupils' interests, challenge them to think, to develop and express their ideas clearly, and to participate keenly in lessons. The teachers are well supported by skilful and well deployed teaching assistants. Planning is thorough and forms a strong basis for the well structured lessons. The subject knowledge of the staff is good and this helps them to pass on their enthusiasm for subjects to the pupils. Interactive whiteboards are well used to bring to life the content of lessons for the pupils. A particular strength is the high quality of the assessment of pupils' progress. This is carried out consistently and meticulously, enabling staff to track clearly and precisely how well each pupil is doing. Assessment information is analysed in detail and this enables teachers and school managers to see patterns of achievement and to be able to improve their teaching and the curriculum when the patterns reveal aspects of the work with which some pupils need further help. Pupils find this very helpful and they are clearly aware of their strengths and weaknesses. They also know and understand their targets for future learning and this is brought about by teachers' very careful explanations of their performance and what they need to learn next. This also forms the basis for the high expectations which teachers have for all pupils and the obvious ambitions which the pupils have to do their best. The pupils know they are in school to work hard and to learn effectively and the teaching and curriculum enable them to do this well. They develop well socially and individually and the curriculum is very effective in promoting their moral, spiritual and cultural awareness.

The care, guidance and support provided are excellent and very much appreciated by the parents and pupils. Staff are trusted and the pupils spoken to were very clear about who they would turn to in school if they had a problem. They were equally confident that in such an event they would receive prompt and effective support. The level of care is provided within a very good atmosphere which prevails in the school, in which staff set very high standards for behaviour and pupils show very good levels of self-discipline. The procedures to promote the health and

safety of pupils are well developed and all staff work consistently within them. The school is diligent in checking that adults working with pupils are fit and proper to do so. Minor disagreements which surface between pupils are reportedly resolved quickly. There is no evidence of bullying. Academic guidance is excellent based on the school's highly effective assessment procedures and the high expectations of teachers.

The school is very well led and managed by an energetic headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably assisted by the other very effective middle managers and the conscientious and dedicated teaching and non-teaching staff. The school's procedures to evaluate its own performance are good and based on a careful analysis of a wide range of evidence, including a clear insight into the quality of teaching. This frank and accurate evaluation provides a solid basis for the school's sharply focused development planning which has supported its past improvements and which guide its current development initiatives. A strong and well informed governing body strikes a good balance between supporting the school and calling it to account. The school has forged purposeful links with the community.

The school's accommodation is well managed despite the difficulties of its split site. It has been decorated to provide a bright and cheerful learning environment though some areas are in need of repair and decoration. Much has been done in recent years to improve facilities, especially outdoors. The school's impending addition to the Nursery is rightly intended to strengthen provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The Foundation Stage is very well managed despite the difficulties in promoting coherence between year groups created by having to work on a split site. Nursery provision is of a very high quality. The children are carefully assessed when they begin and are given precisely tailored experiences to secure the good progress they make. By the time they reach the Reception class they are well prepared for more advanced learning. Provision in Reception is also of a very high quality and children respond and progress well. Throughout this phase children enjoy what they do. They develop good, all round skills which prepare them to engage in learning within the National Curriculum from Year 1 upwards.

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

- Ensure that the process of developing the new facilities for the Foundation Stage is managed so that a more coherent curriculum can be forged between the Nursery and Reception classes.

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

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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**

Inspection of Milton St John's Church of England Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL5 0BN

When I visited your school recently I promised to write to you to let you know how good I believe that it is.

Milton St John's is a good school. It has some excellent features.

- Your teachers look after you very well and give you excellent guidance as you move up the school.
- They are very good at bringing subjects to life for you and your lessons are very interesting.
- You have a wide range of subjects and activities to follow. Not surprisingly most of you really do enjoy coming to school and working hard to learn as well as you do.
- You are helped to do this by the very careful assessments which your teachers make and the clear targets set for you to make progress.
- Your work is generally good and the standards reached in the Year 6 tests are above the national average.
- You also do well in a range of practical subjects and extra-curricular and sporting activities.
- The school is very well managed by the headteacher and staff and they all have high ambitions to make the school even better.
- One of the things which will help this to happen will be the new building to be provided for the youngest pupils. This will help the staff to make the teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes more closely linked.

I wish you all every success as you continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school.