



# Seymour Park Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 106325  
**Local Authority** Trafford  
**Inspection number** 287486  
**Inspection date** 16 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Jon Lovgreen

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>	Northumberland Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Old Trafford, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11		Lancashire M16 9QE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 8721150
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	612	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 8774536
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Alison Bell
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Anthony Rae
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 February 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Seymour Park is a large school in a city location with high levels of deprivation. Children come from a wide variety of backgrounds, faiths, and cultural heritages. The predominant groups are of Indian and Pakistani descent. Three quarters of the children have English as an additional language. The majority arriving to join older year groups have little experience of English. The school has Extended School status, offering a breakfast club and a wide range of activities to children and the community out of hours. It also has an Activemark award.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an excellent school where standards continue to rise. It is very self-aware, assessing its work thoroughly and accurately. Value for money is outstanding. It has been cautious in judging its effectiveness because of the major developments taking place in what is taught and how, but these changes are already having a significant impact. A powerful combination of high quality care, bold and ambitious planning, and increasingly imaginative teaching make it, in the words of parents, 'a joyful place' where 'children not only have fun, but are thrilled by what they learn'. Parents hold the school in the highest esteem because of the dedication of staff, the happy and welcoming atmosphere, and the outstanding leadership and example of the headteacher. Children thrive, appreciating the care and help they get. As one child put it 'this school gives us so much.' All who come to the school are welcomed and respected equally. As a result, the school is at the heart of its very diverse community, and is very successful in creating harmony amongst all connected with it. It sees diversity as an opportunity to relish and use.

Extensive and imaginative refurbishments have provided a modern, high quality learning environment whilst retaining all that was best about a traditional building. The school has used these opportunities outstandingly well. Classrooms and corridors abound with displays celebrating children's work. Teachers make very effective use of the flexibility and space of the building, whilst spaces like Undersea World and the Jungle can fire the imagination or create calm as appropriate. Outside facilities, too, have been markedly improved. Extended school status has opened up a wide range of extra opportunities for children and their families. The breakfast club and sessions where parents can have help in learning how to guide their children's work in English and mathematics at home, give excellent and practical support.

Achievement is good, the more so when the low levels of English, which is for most an additional language, are taken into account. The result is that an intake of below average ability now consistently reaches satisfactory standards by the end of Year 6. Relative weaknesses remain in the extended writing of some children, and the ability of others to apply mathematical ideas to problems. Detailed checking of assessment data and trends has helped the school to highlight and tackle previous areas of weakness such as mathematics in Key Stage 1 and science at Key Stage 2. Boys and girls, children from various minority ethnic groups, and those with learning difficulties make equally good progress. The Foundation Stage gets children off to a cracking start where teaching, including that by support staff is outstanding. Children learn to listen, take turns and cooperate. The balance between formal activities directed by the teacher and others chosen by the children, and indoor and outdoor work are excellent. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is consistently good and improving rapidly. This is because, following a criticism in the previous inspection report, teachers' planning, marking and classroom performance are routinely checked, and there are many more occasions when teachers work together. This has been encouraged by a complete review of what is taught, and an agreed view across all staff about what to teach and how.

Children quickly grow in confidence, learning how to get on with each other, and how to combine enjoyment with working hard. Their books show care and pride and they take real pleasure in new learning or making new things. Even the youngest show a good ability to work and play together. The curriculum is good, successfully getting children interested in learning. They also relish the unusually wide range of extra activities, such as cooking, sewing, arts and crafts, and a range of sports. A programme of theme weeks, and the language links with schools in France and Spain further enrich children's experiences.

The school has moved forward significantly since the previous inspection. This has come about because of the commitment of a dedicated staff who are willing to embrace change. They have responded well to the outstanding, energizing leadership and excellent management of the headteacher. Leaders at all levels show a passion and determination to provide the very best for the children. As a result, 'Wake up; shake up' has become an accepted way of working for teachers and children alike. The scope and quality of the systems for checking the school's performance and seeing how it could improve are very impressive. These, coupled with the clear and shared vision for ambitious improvement and the high quality of leadership and management give it excellent capacity to improve further.

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

- Raise children's standards in extended writing.
- Improve children's ability to understand and apply mathematical ideas.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the school with below average standards overall and low skills in English, which is not the home language for many. Achievement is consistently good throughout the school. Overall standards match the national average by the end of Year 6. Since the previous inspection, results have improved at a quicker rate than in most schools. The progress of most children in English is outstanding, although writing remains a relative weakness for some. The longer children are in the school, the better the progress they make. In 2005, Key Stage 2 national assessment results showed children making only satisfactory progress in science, but since then, results show good improvement in both science and mathematics. Children of Indian and Pakistani heritage make the best progress. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because their needs are quickly and accurately assessed.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Children are happy, confident, tolerant, and willing to take turns. They are considerate, showing interest in those around them and helping one another. The majority love school, as shown in their very good concentration levels and willingness to persevere.

Growing independence sees them able to try things out and discover for themselves. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. An outstanding feature is the respect children have for the beliefs and values of others. Attendance has improved to average, despite the significant minority of families who take extended holidays. Children respond maturely to opportunities to influence school life, winning major competitions for designs to improve toilet and playground facilities, both of which are now excellent.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is invariably good, with an increasing amount of it being outstanding. This is the case in Foundation Stage where activities are very carefully planned to match children's needs and extend their skills. Lessons are well planned for a wide range of active and imaginative approaches. Some teachers are highly creative in their use of excellent displays to stimulate children's work, and background music to create atmosphere. Relationships are a strength. Children want to learn, and take pride in their work. From the earliest years they understand the value of listening and working together. This helps the teacher to focus on helping smaller groups. The constant dialogue which teachers encourage with children results in excellent use of language to explore and explain ideas. The excellent teaching assistants and learning mentors are very well used. Marking is regular and diligent but some pointers for improvement are vague.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum, already good, is being transformed. New appointments and a focus on learning styles are stimulating a radical overhaul. The curriculum is becoming even more responsive to children's interests and needs. They now have a better idea of how topics and skills link together. An emphasis on basic skills, alongside much more 'hands on' activity has helped boys and children with English as an additional language to realise and use their potential. Frequent use of 'brain gym' exercises to enliven energy and thought are a major feature.

Art, music and role play feature strongly in lessons. The rich variety of extra activities and very popular theme weeks such as Arts week, International week and Book week add a further dimension to children's experiences.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Children feel totally safe and happy at school. Routines for looking after them are highly organised, and understood by all. As a result, they readily feel able to go to adults for help. Everything the school does is geared successfully to raising children's

confidence, self-esteem and attendance. Parents feel very well informed about progress, and value the regular and ready access they have to staff, particularly the headteacher. Exemplary work is done with vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties. Teachers work very hard to get to know them, giving precise yet sensitive support. Regular assessments, including children being involved in assessing their own progress, show significant improvement since the last inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding at all levels. The clarity of the school's vision for improvement and the energy with which it is being followed are exceptional. This stems from the inspirational enthusiasm and involvement of the headteacher. The leadership team is highly able and excellent in its organisation and teamwork. The relatively new middle managers are thriving on the challenge of leading curriculum development. Evaluation is extensive yet accessible. An excellent governing body shows keen interest in the school. It shares the school's ambition whilst having the information and experience to carefully check reasons for changes, and their impact. This enables the school to provide excellent value for money.

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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>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### 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>	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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

As you know, I recently visited your school to see how well you are doing, and if the school is giving you the education you deserve. This letter is to tell you what I found.

I think that you are lucky to be in such an excellent school. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. You told me that you love coming to school. That is obvious from the way you work so hard, but with such enjoyment, in all your lessons. You said that you feel really safe and happy, and that is because all the adults working in the school care so much about you and make sure that everything runs smoothly. You behave very well, caring for and helping one another. You are very good at sharing and taking turns at things - whether in lessons or on the splendid playground equipment like the wonderful pirate ship. Teachers are trying really hard to plan lessons that will always interest you. They also work very hard to get to know what you are like as a person, and to find ways to help you learn even better. You get very good chances to make things, learn things and be creative in art and music. The headteacher and other people who manage the school are doing a wonderful job in planning for the future whilst making you all feel special. As a result, everyone who comes into contact with the school becomes enthusiastic about it.

I have asked the teachers and governors to do two things to help your school become even better:

- help some of you to improve your longer pieces of English written work
- give you a better understanding of how what you do in mathematics can help you to solve problems.

You can help by continuing to work hard and look after each other, and by appreciating all the hard work done for you by all the adults in the school. They just want the best for you.

My best wishes to you, and the school, for future success and happiness.