

St John's CofE Primary School Mosley Common

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 106484 |
| Local Authority | Wigan |
| Inspection number | 287523 |
| Inspection dates | 19–20 March 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | John Heap |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | 100 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mr Keith Worthington |
| Headteacher | Mr Warren George |
| Date of previous school inspection | 26 March 2001 |
| School address | Commonside Road Worsley Manchester Lancashire M28 1AE |
| Telephone number | 0161 7902195 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. All pupils are of White British heritage and a very small number of pupils are cared for by the local authority. It serves a residential area with some signs of deprivation and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In recent times, the school has gone through an uncertain period caused by the threat of closure and this has led to increased movements of staff and children. The school has Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school correctly judges itself to be satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. Equally, the school is right that there are significant strengths in the good personal development of pupils. This is fostered by the good and caring ethos that is appreciated by pupils and their parents. Parents agree, 'that Every Child Matters at St John's, there is a strong ethos that children enjoy their time spent at school feeling safe and happy.' Good relationships exist between staff and pupils and there is a supportive ethos that is promoted strongly by the sound leadership and management.

Pupils clearly enjoy school and say so. The otherwise satisfactory curriculum has strong elements, particularly in the promotion of healthy and safe living. Pupils respond well to this and regard the school as a safe and secure place to be. Furthermore, there are strong enrichment activities, such as the much appreciated and wide range of after-school activities. The school council contributes well to the school community and pupils have a widening view of important issues such as the increasing diversity of society and the need to safeguard the environment.

Children get a sound start in the Reception class and make satisfactory progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, many have achieved what is expected of them. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' work and the tracking of pupils' achievements show current standards are average and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Results in Year 2 national tests are improving and on an upward trend, but with reading and mathematics standards being better than writing. Year 6 standards are also best in reading and mathematics and better than recent national test results. Even though these test results were below average, national data show that pupils made satisfactory progress from Year 2 to Year 6. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Recent improvements in the tracking of pupils' achievements and the better monitoring of lessons have led to improved lesson planning, particularly in Years 1 to 4. As a result, there is a much better matching of work to individual pupils' needs and achievement is rising. Nevertheless, inconsistencies in marking pupils' work; insufficient use and development of basic writing skills in the full range of subjects and too few opportunities for investigative work leads to lower standards in writing and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. Basic skills are taught adequately and the preparation for the future is satisfactory.

The headteacher is leading the work on improving the school's approach to improvement planning and all recognise the good sense of detailed tracking of academic achievement. As a result, the indicators of success are challenging and are now firmly based on how well pupils are doing academically. The coordination of English is much more focused on how to improve writing. The governing body supports the school well and is well informed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils.
- Increase the use and development of writing across the full range of subjects and investigational skills in science.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils know how they are doing and what they need to do next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their broadly typical start in Reception, children enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are close to expectations. Most children make sound progress. By the end of Years 2 and 6, current standards are average and sound teaching promotes satisfactory progress. The trend in the Year 2 results is upward and reflects an improving approach to setting challenging targets for pupils' learning and better marking practices. In Year 6, below average results have been affected by higher numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nevertheless, standards in writing and science have been lower than they should have been and reflect weaknesses in the teaching and learning from Years 3 to 6. Across the school, achievement is best in reading and mathematics. On the basis of the improved tracking, achievement in the current Year 6 is better, targets for 2007 are suitably challenging and 'booster' groups are in place to improve pupils' writing further. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those looked after by the local authority make satisfactory progress. They benefit from satisfactory support and from the improving procedures for tracking pupils' achievements.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Good behaviour and relationships are the result of the school's caring and supportive ethos and pupils' particularly strong moral and social development. The school acts quickly to address rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Pupils are sensitive to others' needs and cultures. Pupils make a good contribution by responding enthusiastically to the good range of responsibilities given to them and through the decision-making work of the school council. They contribute well to the local and wider community through charity fundraising events. Pupils participate with interest in a wide range of out-of-school activities, which develop their sporting and creative talents well. Attendance is satisfactory. Good attitudes to school and work and satisfactory basic skills mean that pupils are soundly prepared for future learning. Pupils' self-confidence and collaborative working skills are good and they have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy and safe lifestyle.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and learning typically includes: good relationships between staff and pupils; good classroom management; skilful work by teaching assistants and well organised Foundation Stage lessons that are particularly effective in promoting pupils' personal development. As a result, pupils enjoy their lessons and are keen to work hard and do their best; they behave well and vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in the school.

Pupils are not always given work which challenges them to improve their writing and scientific skills, particularly the highest attainers in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, they do not always reach the highest standards they are capable of. This is because: lesson planning is not

sufficiently matched to individual needs; marking does not provide a clear enough view of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further and there are too few opportunities to use and develop their independent learning skills. Teachers are increasingly confident in using ICT and this has led to pupils achieving average standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum meets most pupils' needs. Pupils' personal development is promoted well. Pupils say how much they have enjoyed the good part played by external providers in fostering healthy and safe lifestyles. They are enthusiastic about the satisfactory range of activities both within and outside the school day. Good links with the local community help pupils to appreciate their place in the wider community. Pupils' academic development is supported adequately by the curriculum. Reading, mathematical and ICT skills are used and developed well in other subjects. There are shortcomings, both in the use and development of writing skills and in investigational skills in science. There is an over-reliance on prepared worksheets that restrict both pupils' opportunities to write at length and to do experiments and investigations.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are cared for well. Support and guidance are satisfactory and improving. Robust procedures are fully in place for safeguarding, child protection and assessing risk. Pupils trust staff to look after them and they know who to turn to if they have problems or worries. There are good links with parents and a wide range of local agencies to promote the well-being of vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff regularly meet with parents and members of external agencies to plan the support required and to review progress. Good induction procedures help Reception children settle happily into school routines. Procedures and practices to track pupils' achievements are good for the younger pupils and there are clear signs of impact through the improving results. Procedures and practices for tracking pupils' achievements in Years 5 and 6 are now in place and the information is highlighting areas that require improvement. What is clear is that there is a weak link between tracking information, the setting of individual learning targets and the marking of pupils' work. As a result, pupils do not have clear enough information about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Satisfactory leadership and management are promoting good care and improvements in the way the school teaches the pupils and tracks their achievements. The headteacher provides strong leadership in several areas, such as, giving clear and strong judgements to teachers about the quality of teaching and in interpreting pupils' achievement data. As a result, there are clear signs of an upward trend in national test results at the end of Year 2. Where underachievement was found in Years 3 and 4, strategies were put in place to overcome the shortcomings, such as placing an experienced teacher with that class and improving the tracking of pupils. Now, the tracking has been introduced into Years 5 and 6 and, as a result, extra provision has been introduced to improve standards in writing and science. Subject coordinators

provide sound support. Coordination of English is improving and strategies are in place to address the shortcomings in writing, particularly in ensuring higher attaining pupils know what is expected of them to move from average to above average standards. These improvements have meant that the school has overcome the recent difficulties and has made sufficient improvement recently. School improvement planning identifies the right priorities and the measures of success are challenging and related to improving pupils' achievement. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory. Governors support the school well and they have a sound view of its strengths and shortcomings. Financial management is prudent.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall |
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Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 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 | 3 |
| 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

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| How well do learners achieve? | 3 |
| The standards ¹ 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 | 3 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| 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 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 | 3 |

The quality of provision

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 3 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 3 |

¹ 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

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 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 | 3 |
| 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**

I thoroughly enjoyed working with you and your teachers this week in your satisfactory school. I am very grateful for your warm welcome, courtesy and the help you provided. I am especially indebted to those who provided freely of their time to talk with me.

What I really liked about your school:

- The way that results are improving in the Year 2 national tests as a result of better teaching and learning.
- The very strong relationships between pupils and with adults.
- The strong support for the school from you and your parents.
- Both your good behaviour and attitudes to school contribute well to the safe and caring ethos in the school.
- The good contribution made by the school council.
- The way that people come into the school and widen the range of activities that enrich your curriculum.

I have asked your teachers to improve your learning, particularly in writing and science. To do this, I have suggested that they make sure they set challenging learning targets for each of you and mark your work so that you know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further. You also need more opportunities to use your writing skills in other subjects and do investigations in science. You can be a great help by always doing your best work and following the advice from your teachers.

I wish you all well and good luck for the future.