

# Garswood Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104778
<b>Local Authority</b>	St. Helens
<b>Inspection number</b>	308667
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gill Jones HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	265
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr S Murphy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kevin Cooney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Hamilton Road Garswood St Helens Lancashire WN4 0SF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01744 678290
<b>Fax number</b>	01744 678294

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	308667

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

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

## Description of the school

Garswood is a slightly larger than average primary school situated in the village of Garswood in the borough of St Helens. Children of families from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds attend the school. Nearly all the children are of White British heritage. A very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. A very small proportion of these children have a statement of educational needs.

The school has national Healthy School status, Basic Skills Mark and Activemark Gold. It is a designated training school for the Training and Development Agency (TDA). The headteacher is seconded for three days a week to work on a national programme to develop leadership capacity in schools. Consequently, some teachers who carry additional responsibility have stepped up to join the senior team.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Garswood is a very caring school where children are happy. Parents, governors and staff say it is 'one big family where everyone looks after each other'. The leadership is outward looking and has enthused staff to work collaboratively to provide a rich and varied curriculum. Children's achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Leadership has not focused sufficiently on raising children's achievement in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Consequently, some children do not reach the standards of which they are capable.

Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and are well prepared to start the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly in line with the national average for several years. However, in 2007 standards in reading, writing and mathematics fell to well below the national average. The school identified the reasons for this and has taken steps to provide additional support for these children. Standards in Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with the national average, though fewer children reach the higher levels in mathematics and science than nationally. Progress in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. Children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as the others.

The children's personal development and well-being are outstanding. Typically, Garswood children are confident and articulate and they make excellent relationships with adults and each other. Attendance is above the national average and children are keen to take an active part in all the activities on offer. Members of the school council are very influential and they take their responsibilities seriously. Children behave well. They value learning and want to achieve their best. The pastoral care children receive is outstanding. They are very well supported by all staff who create a calm and happy atmosphere that is conducive to learning.

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are imaginative in the way they capture the children's interest in lessons and encourage them to be confident as learners. Very good relationships between staff and children are a consistent feature in lessons throughout the school. Teachers' expectations of what children can achieve in English and mathematics are sometimes too low and consequently targets do not always offer sufficient challenge, particularly for the most able. The curriculum is well matched to children's interests and provides a wide range of opportunities, including learning other languages. The provision for English and mathematics has recently been revised in line with national guidance. This is beginning to have a positive impact by providing a sharper focus on teaching the basic skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership is enthusiastic and committed to ensuring that children enjoy their education. On the whole it knows its strengths well, but it has not looked closely enough at its impact on raising achievement so it has not made all the improvements required by the last inspection. Senior leaders are now taking action to tackle underachievement. Teachers' performance management is raising their awareness of the need to improve children's achievement. The recognition by the governors of the need for a greater accountability for standards, combined with the energy and commitment of the new leadership team, gives the school a good capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Most children enter Foundation Stage having previously attended a pre-school setting. Their levels of development on entry vary widely and reflect to some extent their pre-school experience. Most children enter with skills and abilities broadly within the range expected for children of their age. They make good progress in the Reception class, especially in their social and emotional development. The opportunities to learn through play both inside and outside are enhanced by good quality resources and imaginative planning by staff. Teaching is good. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and relationships are excellent. Parents say their children are very happy and that staff support them exceptionally well. They are particularly appreciative of the way children are introduced to school. After less than one term in school, children currently in Reception appear confident and articulate. By the time children enter Year 1, most have achieved the skills needed to become independent learners who are more than ready to start the National Curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that data is used effectively by leadership at all levels to inform whole school improvement planning.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave Key Stage 2. However, within this overall satisfactory picture, some children, particularly the more able, do not achieve the standards of which they are capable.

Most children enter Year 1 with levels of development that either reach or exceed those expected for five-year-olds. Standards reached at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics have been around the average for several years. In 2007 the standards achieved at Year 2 fell to well below the national average. In response to this, the school has introduced small classes and many children are receiving extra help in the key skills of reading and mathematics. These children are now making better progress. The achievement of the more able children has declined over the past two years. For example, no children have reached above average standards (Level 3) in writing in that time.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. Since the last inspection, most children have made satisfactory progress. However, some of the more able pupils have not done as well as they could. Children make good progress in information and communication technology (ICT) and reach above average standards. More challenging school targets for English and mathematics have been set for 2008 and 2009. Previous targets were not high enough to ensure that children made any better than satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

The children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Children are courteous and polite and behaviour is good. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and are keen to achieve their best. They understand how to keep fit and healthy and those who take a school meal choose a balanced diet at lunchtime. Children feel extremely safe in school and say there is no bullying. They are happy to share concerns through the 'worry boxes' and are confident that all staff will provide good support in helping them to solve problems. Children take good advantage of the wide range of clubs and activities the school provides and look forward particularly to challenging their personal fitness on the residential visits. The school council takes its responsibilities extremely seriously; for example, members recently interviewed and appointed monitors to recycle waste paper. They represent the children's views very well. One of their recent successes is the improvement of the play areas. All children are very keen to help others and work well to support their chosen charities.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

A typical lesson at Garswood is imaginatively planned to capture the children's interest. Teaching is lively and energetic and very good relationships are a consistent feature in all classes. Teachers and teaching assistants make good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards and computer programs to provide support for children who are falling behind with their work. The best lessons are well planned, with clear learning expectations which are shared with the children so they know exactly what they have to achieve. Where teaching is less than good, children of different abilities are all given the same activity. This leads to frustration for the children who are less able and to underachievement for the more able. Teachers' expectations of what children can achieve in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are sometimes too low.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The school provides a broad curriculum which meets national requirements. Information and communication technology (ICT) and lessons in personal, social and health education are strengths. Children have the opportunity to learn several modern foreign languages. Although lessons are based on the National Curriculum they are often taught as themes involving more than one subject; for example, English, mathematics and science were taught as part of a mini-project on forensic science. This approach to the curriculum captures the interest of children and makes them enthusiastic about learning. Appropriate emphasis is given to the basic skills. In line with government guidance, teachers have reconsidered the basic skills that need teaching and have a clearer picture of the order in which they should be taught.

The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities; for example, it has a brass band, a nature club and children are taken out of school on a series of residential visits. The school provides a range of intervention programmes for children who experience learning difficulties and/or disabilities and individual educational plans are of good quality.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good level of care, guidance and support. Children are exceptionally well cared for and parents say that this is one of the reasons why they chose the school. All staff are approachable and know the children very well. They build the children's confidence and self-esteem very successfully. The school has established good systems, such as the 'friendship benches' and 'worry boxes', to enable children to feel safe and secure. Effective use is made of incentives and rewards to encourage good behaviour. The school meets all the current national requirements for safeguarding.

The procedures for monitoring the progress of children who experience learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. The school tracks the progress of all children. However, information from tracking is not used effectively to raise achievement and standards. Guidance given to children in lessons is satisfactory. Children in some classes know their learning targets and where this is the case, progress is faster. Marking is positive and celebrates children's achievements. There are pockets of very effective marking where children are given good guidance for their next steps in learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The leadership has been successful in developing a good ethos for learning. The good partnerships between the school, providers of teacher training and the National College of School Leadership have brought in significant resources, for example for ICT. Staff's willingness to pull together as a team and 'go the extra mile' is much appreciated by parents and children alike. The leadership's passionate belief in the government's 'Every Child Matters' agenda has led to outstanding pastoral care for children.

Raising children's achievement in the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics has now become the focus of leadership's work. Teachers keep large amounts of assessment information about individual children, but senior leaders do not make best use of this data to evaluate trends in performance and identify early signs of underachievement. Targets for 2008 and 2009 are much more challenging. However, these targets are not matched well enough with children's individual targets and there is still the risk that the more able children underachieve. The new performance management arrangements link children's progress more closely to teacher's performance. However, it is too early in this process for it to show an impact on raising standards.

Subject leadership is developing well. Governors are committed to the school and give willingly of their time. However, they have only recently started to hold the school to account for children's achievement.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



**Annex A**

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
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**

You may remember that Mrs Cooper, Mr Helm and I visited your school a short while ago to check how well you are learning. Thank you for talking to us and for sharing your views about your school, we listened to them very carefully. We enjoyed our visit very much and this letter is to explain what we found.

We judged your school to be satisfactory overall. This means that it is fine, but it is much better at some things than others. Your parents told us that school is a happy place for you to learn and we agree. We saw that the care for children at Garswood is second to none. You behave well and show each other respect. Your school council takes its responsibilities seriously; we were impressed by the keen interest you all take in recycling to save our planet. We noticed that your teachers plan imaginative lessons which capture your interest well and that you are good at using the up to date ICT equipment. You told us that you enjoy keeping fit and healthy and really look forward to challenging yourselves on the residential visits.

The very youngest children get a good start to their education. Your school leaders designed their learning space well and they enjoy all their activities. After only one term in school they are already very confident communicators and are making good progress in learning their letters and numbers.

We found that the standards you reach in reading, writing, science and mathematics need to improve. We think you can do much better in these aspects. Your headteacher explained to us what the school has started to do to improve your progress. Your teachers intend to raise your standards in reading, writing, science and mathematics. Your school leaders are also going to make better links between your progress checks and the school's plans for the future. This is your challenge: to do your best to reach your targets. We know you will be keen to do this because so many of you told us that you want to achieve your very best.

With my very best wishes for the future.