

# Mersey Drive Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105299
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	308824
<b>Inspection date</b>	22 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Onyon

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Ann Audin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda Parker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 January 2004
<b>School address</b>	Mersey Drive Whitefield Manchester Lancashire M45 8LN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7666298
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7666298

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, curriculum, care guidance and support, and leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, looking at pupils' work, assessment information, documents, the analysis of parental questionnaires, interviews and discussions. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found 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

This smaller than average primary school serves an area of considerable social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also well above average. A large proportion of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Of those from other ethnic backgrounds, only a few are at the early stages of learning English. The school receives additional local authority funding to provide for small groups of pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Mersey Drive is a good school where pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well. It is particularly successful in supporting the high proportion of pupils who find learning difficult or who have challenges in their lives. This is because the school provides a secure and positive environment for learning where pupils feel valued. The great majority of parents rightly think the school is doing a good job and say their children are very happy here. Drawing on these strengths the pupils make good progress. By Year 6 they are growing in confidence and standards are broadly average. The school has improved since its previous inspection.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Many children enter Year 1 with skills lower than those expected and in Years 1 and 2 competent teaching consolidates their basic skills. In these year groups there is a clear focus on nurturing the personal qualities that form the foundation for pupils to develop into confident learners. Standards in the current Year 2 are below average as the result of weaknesses in pupils' skills in reading and writing. The school's current focus on teaching structured reading and writing skills is beginning to raise standards, but the full impact is yet to be seen. In Years 3 to 6 pupils make good progress and achieve well as a result of consistently good teaching. They are given good opportunities to apply their developing reading, writing and number skills in other subjects. Results in the Key Stage 2 national tests show a rising trend over the last three years. The high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, looked-after children and the few who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because work is well matched to their needs and they receive very good support from adults. In particular, pupils with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities who are part of the 'arches' and 'bridges' groups are very well provided for.

Pupils' personal skills develop well because the staff successfully nurture confidence and enthusiasm for learning. The pupils enjoy all aspects of school life, which was obvious in discussions with them, 'We make everyone feel welcome because no one is left out,' was a typical comment. Behaviour is good overall, but a few pupils find it hard to behave well all the time. However, the consistent application of the school's well balanced system of rewards and sanctions enables challenging behaviour to be managed well. The pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and they feel safe and cared for. They contribute well to the school community through various responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council. They help enhance the local community, for example by contributing to improvements in a local park and undertaking charitable work to help worthy causes. Good personal skills and average academic standards prepare pupils soundly for the future.

A good curriculum meets the wide range of pupils' needs and their success at school is encouraged by good levels of care, guidance and support. The school meets the current requirements in relation to safeguarding its pupils. Pupils speak very positively about the curriculum and the additional enrichment activities, saying for example, 'Teachers make learning interesting and fun.' In their desire to improve, school leaders are beginning to work effectively together to evaluate and develop specific areas of the curriculum, for example extending opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to make choices about their learning in a similar way to those available in the Foundation Stage.

The headteacher provides a clear vision and considerable drive. She has high expectations of pupils' attainment. There is a strong focus on improving pupils' achievement. The staff team are fully committed to this shared vision and are making appropriate use of the outcomes of

a recently introduced system for tracking pupils' academic progress. While the school has identified the need to increase the rate of progress in reading and writing for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the impact of the activities introduced has yet to be seen in assessment outcomes. Governance is good. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness which, together with recent improvements in pupils' achievement, provides a good platform for further progress. The school provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage because good teaching and well planned, interesting activities help them to succeed in all aspects of their learning. Children's attainment when they join the Nursery is much lower than is typical for their ages, particularly in personal, social and language skills. Good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes helps children to achieve well. They settle quickly in the Nursery because good systems for getting to know families help staff to be aware of and meet children's needs. Parents say this is a key strength. High standards of care, with close attention to the welfare of each child, create a happy and secure environment in which children thrive. Small classes with generous staffing ensure that adults can support children's learning effectively. Activities are interesting and enjoyable, such as when children explored an 'artic environment'. In this sort of activity, the staff encourage, support and enrich children's learning well, particularly in language skills, which are a weakness in many children. The staff also work with individuals, groups or the whole class to teach basic skills, such as in the regular and systematic teaching of letter sounds. Through regular observations, the staff note the progress children are making and use this information to plan what they need to learn next. The school's data and observations of lessons confirm that children make good progress but, because many start school with weak skills, standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are still below those expected nationally for children this age.

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

- Improve pupils' skills in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2.

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## Annex A

## 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	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

### 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?	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>	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	2
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	2
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



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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome in your school and for being so helpful to us during the recent inspection. I thought you were well behaved, polite, treated each other well and worked hard in your lessons. I enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school. You are in a good school where all staff work hard to help you to do your best.

You told me that you liked your school and enjoy your lessons as well as the clubs, visits and visitors. You are rightly very proud of your school and speak about making everybody welcome. You spoke about the exciting enrichment activities that you enjoy every Friday, and how much you look forward to them. You care for each other and take on responsibilities like joining the school council, helping you to become good citizens as you get older.

I have asked your school to help the pupils in Years 1 and 2 make better progress with their reading and writing skills because this will help them in all their work. It was a pleasure to visit your school. Keep working hard so that you continue to do well.