

# Wesley Methodist Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105329
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	308831
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	219
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Denise Bigg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr G Hirst
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Forth Road Radcliffe Manchester Lancashire M26 4PX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7233416
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7259152

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school lies close to the town centre and serves a mixed area of council and privately owned housing. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that usually found. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are few pupils at early stages of learning English. Wesley Primary holds the Healthy School and Activemark awards and has been recognised by the Groundwork Trust for its extensive work in environmental education. At the time of the inspection the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Wesley Methodist Primary is a satisfactory school overall. Pupils develop well personally and the pastoral care they receive is outstanding. The school has good links with the community and its pupils benefit from a wide range of educational trips and visits, which do much to promote their cultural development. Pupils are proud of their school, their classmates and the adults who work with them. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school does for their sons and daughters and believe that, in their words, 'It is a school which makes everyone feel welcome.'

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. After a period when standards in English, mathematics and science declined in Key Stage 2, the strategies put in place by leaders to boost progress are now beginning to pay dividends, and standards, particularly in English and mathematics, are beginning to rise and are now broadly average at the end of Year 6. As a result of more emphasis on extended writing across all areas of the curriculum, pupils' skills are now much better than at the time of the previous inspection. However, standards and achievement in science are not as strong and pupils' confidence in pursuing their own research and finding things out for themselves remains underdeveloped.

Pupils' behaviour is good and they get on well with their peers. They have a keen understanding of right and wrong and older pupils are always willing to support their younger counterparts; for example, when leading play activities at break and lunchtime. Pupils also respect the environment and are fully aware of the necessity of looking after it; their skills and efforts in developing the school garden have been recognised by a local environment agency. They are still concerned, rightly, that other opportunities to learn through play outside the classroom are limited, especially for children in the Foundation Stage. Pupils are actively involved in taking responsibility in many areas of school life and the school council takes the lead in representing the views of its constituents. Pupils speak with conviction about the importance of healthy eating and of keeping fit.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to progress at an adequate rate. Teachers have good classroom management skills, use the electronic whiteboard effectively as a learning tool and have good relationships with their pupils. The level of challenge they provide for the more able pupils to reach for even higher standards is inconsistent across the school and is not high enough.

The curriculum meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils, who are beginning to see the links between subjects as a result of a themed approach to subject delivery. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities are impressive and pupils speak highly of the variety of sports in which they can take part. They are proud of their successes on the football field and are waiting with anticipation for the semi-final of the local competition, when the Wesley girls' team is hoping to equal the success of the boys!

The care that teachers and support staff show towards their pupils is outstanding and is recognised as such by parents and their children. Pupils experiencing difficulty are supported well by teaching assistants and are able to make the same progress as other pupils. The quality of advice that pupils receive on the standard of their work is developing but there remains a lack of focus and consistency in academic guidance and in the setting of realistic targets to improve standards and achievement further.

Leadership and management are satisfactory but the school has too generous a view of its overall performance. Strategies established to address areas for improvement since the previous inspection are well founded but were not led sharply enough initially and are only now beginning to demonstrate their effectiveness. Nonetheless, standards are rising, achievement is improving and pupils' personal development is a strength. The school, therefore, has satisfactory capacity to improve further and provides sound value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children join the Reception year with skills which vary widely but which are generally below what is typical for their age. They have particular weaknesses in their social and emotional development and in their skills in communication, language and literacy. The quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a result, children achieve well during the Reception class and most enter Year 1 with the expected skills in all areas of learning.

Good induction procedures ensure that children settle well into school routines, quickly gaining in both confidence and independence. They are well cared for and supported in the vibrant classroom and particularly enjoy the many practical activities, which are the consequence of detailed planning to meet the different needs of each individual. However, opportunities for outdoor play are limited and there is not enough access to appropriate Foundation Stage experiences outside the classroom environment. Assessment practice is effective and teachers and teaching assistants record the progress of their pupils carefully and accurately. Leadership and management are satisfactory but the Foundation Stage is not represented directly at senior leadership level.

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

- Provide a sharper focus to and more consistency in academic guidance and target setting across the school.
- Foster pupils' investigative skills in order to improve standards and achievement in science.
- Provide consistent and appropriate challenge for the more able pupils.
- Improve provision for outdoor learning, particularly in the Foundation Stage.

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**

Pupils enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment, make satisfactory progress across the school and reach broadly average standards by the time they leave at the end of Year 6. Standards in Key Stage 2 have fluctuated since the previous inspection and there has been a declining trend in recent years in all core subjects, but particularly in mathematics and science. Initiatives established by senior leaders to improve standards and achievement have been slow to demonstrate impact. However, with purposeful support from the local authority, these strategies have begun to ensure improvements, particularly in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that standards and achievement are rising and that pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to reach their academic targets, which are considerably higher than last year's. Moreover, many pupils in Year 5 are demonstrating significant improvements

in writing for a range of audiences. Standards in science remain below average and progress in this subject is less secure. As a result of comprehensive support from teaching assistants, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making the same progress as their classmates.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their good behaviour; positive attitudes towards their learning; warm relationships with their peers and with the adults who work with them; and consistently above average attendance. Pupils have the highest regard for their teachers who, they say, 'always help us when we are stuck with our work.' Indeed, pupils show real enthusiasm for school. Their singing in assembly is a joy to hear. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is promoted effectively by the caring environment which is central to the school, in which they know their efforts are valued. The school's work for a wide range of charities is a byword in the local community.

Pupils are both polite and friendly and show good levels of respect for themselves, their classmates and the environment; they are rightly proud of their achievements in developing the school grounds. Pupils are well aware of how to stay safe, healthy and fit and are always willing, through the school council for example, to take responsibility in many areas of school life, particularly to help younger children. Pupils' satisfactory achievement in literacy and numeracy prepares them adequately for their future careers.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall but there are good features within it. Good levels of engagement are the norm in most lessons and pupils respond eagerly to the generally high expectations teachers have of what they can do. In an impressive Year 5 literacy lesson, for example, pupils were delighted to recall the story of King Arthur, in words and phrases that would be readily accessible to younger children. Similarly, pupils in Year 2 were engrossed in their work on 'capacity' and warm relationships with their teacher and with their classmates were a key factor in their impressive progress. Teachers and support assistants work hard to develop pupils' confidence. On occasion, however, teachers do not take advantage of pupils' willingness to support each other. In these lessons, group and paired work is not used effectively enough to ensure that pupils can benefit from their classmates as an extra resource. In addition, planning does not always provide for realistic challenge for pupils of different levels of ability and the more able pupils are not always required to reach for the very highest standards.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and to the raising of their self-esteem. Moreover, elements of the curriculum in Year 6 to prepare pupils for the rigours of secondary education have been locally recognised. The school is developing a thematic approach to curriculum delivery, in order to encourage pupils to see the links between subjects and to reinforce their acquisition of study skills. Tuition in a modern language is well developed and French is taught to all pupils in Key Stage 2.

Pupils themselves speak highly of the wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities, enhanced by a variety of visits, visitors and outside speakers. For example, pupils' cultural experiences are extended by visits to Oldham Coliseum, the Bridgewater Hall and the Lowry Centre. Sport and games are important areas of the curriculum and the school is justly proud of the successes of boys and girls, on the football field for example. The school recognises, however, that opportunities for a wider range of outdoor activities on the school site are limited.

Addressing an area for development at the time of the previous inspection, the school has placed more emphasis on developing pupils' writing across subject areas. However, there is not enough emphasis on fostering pupils' skills in investigation in science.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pastoral care provided by the school for its pupils is outstanding and teachers and teaching assistants work hard to promote pupils' personal, social and emotional well-being. A typical comment from parents is, 'Staff are always so helpful and seem to know each child individually.' Pupils benefit from sensitive support during lessons and in small groups outside the classroom by the talented and committed team of ancillary staff, as an integral part of special educational needs provision. As a result, pupils who often find the work difficult, and also those considered vulnerable, make the same progress as their peers. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and all staff and governors have received relevant training.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving: most pupils are aware of how they are progressing. Target setting is better than at the time of the previous inspection but its use is not consistent across all years and there is too much variation from class to class in how targets are established and used. The quality of marking is also inconsistent and varies from detailed advice on how pupils can improve their work to little more than cursory comment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory with good features. The school has addressed, with varying levels of success, the issues for development from the previous inspection and pupils' writing in particular has improved. However, standards and achievement, especially in mathematics and science, declined over a three-year period and strategies to improve pupils' progress are only just beginning to bear fruit. In addition, the setting of individual targets is now evident but its use is inconsistent and it is too early to see the full impact of this work.

The monitoring of pupils' progress is completed satisfactorily by senior and middle leaders and this results in the accurate identification of pupils who need further support. The performance of different subject areas is taken seriously by the school and, although close evaluation of achievement and standards is at an early stage in some areas, teachers themselves speak highly of the support and guidance they receive from specialist subject coordinators. The extent and accuracy of whole-school self-evaluation are satisfactory, but the school overestimates its performance in some aspects of its work.

Governors are committed in their support for the school and many are increasingly becoming more actively involved in several areas of school life.

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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?	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	3

### 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?	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	2
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?	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	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Wesley Methodist Primary School, Manchester, M26 4PX

Thank you for your warm welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you, watching you learn and listening to your wonderful singing in assembly. We are particularly grateful to the pupils in Year 5 who gave us a spontaneous performance of the 'Pace Egg' play. Their Lancashire accents were a joy to hear! We would now like to tell you about what we think about your school.

You are very proud of Wesley Methodist Primary School and enjoy attending it. It gives you a satisfactory education overall. The care your teachers and teaching assistants provide for you is excellent. Your behaviour is good and you look after each other well. You know how to stay healthy and the way you take part in the many games and sporting activities shows that you understand that keeping fit is very important too! Members of the school council try hard to represent your views and your environmental work, particularly in the school garden, is very impressive indeed.

You make satisfactory progress in your studies and your writing is getting better and better. Things are improving in mathematics too, but your standards in science need to be higher. You take full advantage of the many extra-curricular activities you have and enjoy the wide range of educational visits in which you take part.

As you know, nothing is perfect and, as well as asking your school leaders to provide more opportunities for you (and also the children in the Reception class) to learn outdoors, we have discussed with them a few things to make your school even better. We think they could give you more experiments in science to improve your skills in investigating and research. We also think they could give you more advice on how well you are doing so that better targets can be set for you to reach higher levels. Your teachers agree with us that those of you who find some of the work fairly easy should be challenged more to produce even better work!

Thank you once again for your kindness to us and for your contribution to the inspection. We wish you all every success in the future.