

St Agnes CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105500
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308871
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mohammed Akhtar
Headteacher	Mr P Smith
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2004
School address	Farrer Road Longsight Manchester Lancashire M13 0QX
Telephone number	0161 2244680
Fax number	0161 2244680

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Inspection number	308871

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the impact of teaching and the curriculum on progress and standards, particularly in Key Stage 1, and in writing and communication skills; the quality of provision and children's progress in the Foundation Stage; the impact of leadership and management on improving the school's effectiveness, with particular focus on writing and communication skills. Evidence was gathered from: nationally published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussions with a governor, members of staff and pupils; the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 average sized school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive free school meals is above average. Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with strong Islamic traditions. Most speak English as an additional language, and when they first start school their experience and understanding of English is very limited. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is higher than that found in most other schools.

The school has achieved Manchester's Silver Inclusion Standard Award.

The school is involved in a local authority reorganisation initiative and is currently in temporary accommodation, in pre-fabricated buildings on a site close to its original location. The outdoor area available for the school's use, although safe and secure, is small and it has not been possible to provide a dedicated outdoor learning area for the Foundation Stage classes. A move to a new school building on the original site is scheduled to take place early in 2009 and at that point, the school is designated to increase in size from one to one and a half forms in each year group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, where pupils work and play together very harmoniously and achieve well. The school successfully nurtures an ethos of self-respect and respect for others, and this is central to its happy and effective learning community. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide strong and effective leadership. Leaders know their school and its community very well; their self-evaluation is accurate, and is underpinned by rigorous assessment and review. An effective staffing structure with key stage teams led by senior staff supports effective management and helps to assure the quality of provision. The team structure enables all staff to contribute to school improvement, and good systems ensure that leaders have a clear overview.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills below typical expectations. Their needs are analysed accurately and good provision enables them to make good progress throughout the school. Standards at the end of Year 2 were below average in 2007, but, as the result of a range of improvement initiatives, standards in Key Stage 1 have risen in the current year and are now broadly average. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007 were broadly average overall and above average in mathematics. This reflects the very good progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2. Pupils of Pakistani and Bangladeshi heritages achieved standards above those typically achieved nationally by pupils from these ethnic backgrounds. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved well in relation to their abilities and starting points. Current pupils in Key Stage 2 are working at broadly similar levels to those reached last year. There is evidence across the school that the recently introduced, highly focused teaching of reading and writing skills is beginning to raise standards, especially among younger pupils. Standards in writing are still below average in Key Stage 1, however, and the school acknowledges that there is further work to be done in this aspect of literacy.

Pupils' good achievement is the result of good quality teaching, a curriculum that interests and engages them and good quality pastoral care that helps them grow in confidence. Many parents and pupils commented on helpful, friendly and approachable staff who are always on hand to deal with problems and anxieties. Pupils feel they are listened to and cared for in school. Lessons are interesting and move along at a good pace. Teachers give clear directions and use questioning well to support the development of pupils' thinking skills. They provide good quality guidance for pupils in lessons and mark their work supportively, but do not always give enough prompts in their marking to help pupils understand what they need to do next to move their learning forward. Pupils' outstandingly good behaviour and their very positive attitudes to learning mean that lessons run smoothly and playtimes are happy. A good range of small play equipment is provided at playtimes and a quiet area is also designated for those who prefer to sit and chat with friends. The lack of space to play sport or team games on the temporary site restricts the opportunities the school can currently offer its pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The school's strong emphasis on praise and valuing each individual ensures pupils grow in self-esteem and form good quality relationships with staff and with each other. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyle issues and they are encouraged to eat and drink healthily. They understand the importance of keeping themselves safe and older pupils show very caring attitudes to the younger children, for example, at playtimes, when pupils from Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 play together happily and enjoy each others' company. Pupils are keen to contribute to the community, for example, by acting as group leaders in class or taking charge of setting up audio-visual equipment for assemblies. They leave the school with good

skills that prepare them well for their future lives. Attendance and punctuality are good, reflecting the pupils' enjoyment of school and the school's positive relationships with parents and families. Good quality leadership and management ensure that the school runs smoothly and effectively. Governors give a satisfactory level of support. Procedures are in place to promote child protection and health and safety. Staff are enthusiastic and determined to provide the best they can for pupils, despite accommodation difficulties during this interim period in the reorganisation process. Their strong and tested commitment, good teamwork, effective leadership and the school's community ethos all combine to give it good capacity to make continued improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children join the Nursery class with few communication skills and limited knowledge and understanding of the world. The great majority come from families where English is not the home language. The children settle quickly into their new surroundings and make rapid progress in learning to speak and understand their new language. Good leadership, effective teamwork and good understanding of how young children learn help to create a stimulating environment in which children of all abilities make good progress. Learning activities are stimulating and well managed, with a good balance achieved between those that are led by adults and activities chosen and directed by the children themselves. In the temporary accommodation, outdoor learning opportunities for the children in the Foundation Stage are restricted, although every effort is made to find opportunities for them to engage in investigative and adventurous play. Teaching is good, overall, with some outstanding practice in the Reception class. This enables children to progress well and they leave the Foundation Stage with skills at typical levels for their age group in most areas of learning. Children's writing skills develop at a slower rate than their reading skills and the school is currently working to address this through a range of new teaching and learning initiatives. Positive early outcomes are already in evidence, for example, in the eagerness shown by children in the Reception class to practise their skills in writing in their play activities. Above all, learning is fun in the Foundation Stage. Happy, warm relationships, a well planned curriculum and good teaching all enable children's education to get off to a good start.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing in Key Stage 1.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking to ensure that pupils are given clear guidance on what they should do next to improve their work.

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?	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 ¹ 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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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

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

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

Inspection of St Agnes C of E Primary School, Manchester, M13 0QU

Thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. As you know, I came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. This is what I found:

? St Agnes Primary School is a good school. It is led and managed well by the headteacher and the staff, and you are being given a good standard of education.

? It is also a very happy school and this shows in your good attendance and punctuality and your excellent behaviour.

? You are taught well and this is helping you to make good progress in your learning. I was also very pleased to see that you all work hard and try your best in lessons. Keep up the good work!

I've asked the headteacher and the staff to continue to work with you to improve standards in writing. I've also asked them to make sure that marking in your books always gives you clear guidance about what you need to do next to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to be happy learners and by keeping up your very high standards of behaviour.

With my very best wishes for the future