

East Crompton St George's CofE School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 105717 |
| Local Authority | Oldham |
| Inspection number | 308931 |
| Inspection dates | 4–5 December 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Kathryn Dodd |

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 | 179 |
| School | |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs H Gloster |
| Headteacher | Mrs Kate Nicholson (Acting) |
| Date of previous school inspection | 9 November 2005 |
| School address | George Street East Crompton Shaw Oldham Lancashire OL2 8HG |
| Telephone number | 01706 847502 |
| Fax number | 01706 841516 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all the pupils at this average sized school are from White British family backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. In recent years, the number of pupils attending the school has declined, and this has resulted in organisational and staffing changes. The headteacher is currently absent and the deputy headteacher has taken up the role of acting headteacher. The school holds the Green Flag Eco-Schools accreditation and has very recently achieved the Activemark award.

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

This satisfactory school has an accurate view of its overall effectiveness and provides satisfactory value for money. It is a happy, friendly and welcoming place, where a good standard of care and support for pupils is an integral part of day-to-day practice. Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to learning, and can talk knowledgeably about what they have to do to keep healthy. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging to their school community and are keen to contribute positively towards it. Their good personal development provides a positive platform upon which to improve their academic achievement, and prepares them to become responsible citizens of the future. Most parents say that they are pleased with the quality of education that their children receive. They particularly appreciate all that the school does to ensure that their children enjoy school, such as the good range of musical and sporting activities.

Outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage enables children to get off to a flying start with their learning. Staff give very careful consideration to ensuring that activities enable them to build rapidly on their existing skills. As a result of satisfactory teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 and a satisfactory curriculum, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make adequate progress. Standards by Year 6 are broadly average. Although teachers regularly assess pupils to find out what they can already do, they do not always use this information robustly enough to plan further work that matches pupils' varying learning needs. As a result, the progress of some pupils, especially the more able ones, is often too slow. Similarly, staff do not always use the information they have about pupils' attainment to check that they are on track to meet their learning targets, or to highlight if learning is moving on at a good enough rate.

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory. As a result of the absence of the headteacher, a very recent temporary management structure has been put into place. The acting headteacher makes a strong contribution to moving the school forward, because improving the quality of teaching and learning and keeping a closer eye on pupils' progress are high on her agenda. Staff welcome their good opportunities for further training. They value the support that stems from effective partnerships with outside agencies and organisations. At present, however, the acting headteacher shoulders much of the responsibility for finding out how well the school is doing. This is because other leaders and managers do not have a clear understanding of their temporary roles and responsibilities, or the skills they need to fulfil them. This, along with the uncertainties arising from the absence of the headteacher, makes it more difficult for the school to tackle its weaknesses. Nevertheless, there is a realistic and sensible view of the way forward, with a clear priority to speed up pupils' progress. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory, and there is a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

When children start school, their skills are broadly typical for their age. The very warm and caring relationships between adults and children, along with the bright and lively learning environment, ensure that children quickly develop a real thirst for learning, and settle easily into school routines. Children make outstanding progress and, by the time they start Year 1, almost all achieve or are working beyond the goals set nationally in all the areas of learning. Children's personal, social and emotional development is particularly rapid. This is because adults make the most of every opportunity to help children to learn to get along well together,

talk about their learning, grow in confidence and behave very well. Teachers and support staff work together closely to find out how well children are progressing. The records of small steps in their achievement are used well to make sure that the activities available build well on what they can already do. The Foundation Stage leader makes a significant contribution to improving provision, which has strengthened since the previous inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress between Years 1 and 6.
- Use information about pupils' attainment to plan work that meets their differing learning needs, especially for the more able.
- Keep a closer check on whether or not pupils are on track to reach their learning targets, and provide the support and challenge needed to ensure that they do.
- Develop the roles, responsibilities and skills of leaders and managers, so that the responsibility for improving the school is shared more equitably.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as 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

Between Years 1 and 6, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress and standards by Year 6 are average. In recent years, standards by Year 2 have been average. For some pupils, however, especially the more able ones, progress in Years 1 and 2 has been too slow. Although recent action taken by the school has started to put this right, it is too soon to see the accelerating progress reflected in higher standards by the end of Year 2. In 2007, pupils in Year 6 reached above average standards; the highest in recent years. This represents good progress from their starting points. The smaller than usual number of pupils tested and a range of 'booster' support programmes, along with strong teaching by the deputy headteacher, all contributed to this positive picture. The school has accurately identified that pupils' progress, especially that of the more able pupils, needs to speed up. In order to achieve this, staff are focusing on raising expectations of pupils' achievement, including setting more challenging learning targets. In the past, however, staff have not made certain that pupils have remained on track to meet their targets, and this remains a priority for development.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils say they feel happy and safe in school. They enjoy participating in a good range of sporting activities and know that this will help to keep them healthy. Pupils' behaviour is good, particularly when working alongside adults. They are confident that behaviour has improved recently. A whole-school focus to ensure that pupils' achievements are valued highly and celebrated often is paying dividends. Pupils growing maturity and confidence are seen in the enthusiastic way that they carry out duties around the school. Older pupils are particularly keen to help younger ones, for example, with reading. Pupils feel a strong sense of belonging to their school community. The recent 'eco schools' project has increased pupils' awareness of current local and global

environmental issues. Pupils' growing personal and social skills, along with satisfactory progress in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, prepare them soundly for secondary school and for becoming responsible young adults.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and learning. Good organisation, positive relationships, caring support for pupils and effective management of behaviour are strong features of most lessons. Pupils are attentive and behave well. The rate at which pupils make progress varies. This is because teachers' expectations of them, both in lessons and over time, are not always sufficiently high to push their learning forward at a good rate. Teachers regularly assess pupils in order to find out what they can already do. When teachers do not use this assessment information effectively enough to plan new work, however, the progress of some pupils, particularly the more able ones, is too slow. Nevertheless, teachers and support staff have responded with enthusiasm to opportunities for professional development. As a result, teachers' skills and confidence are growing, and this is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Although the range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visitors to the school are similar to that found in most schools, the range of opportunities to develop pupils' musical talents and sporting achievements are good. This contributes positively to pupils' good personal development. Since the previous inspection, provision for ICT has improved. Pupils access a growing range of opportunities across the curriculum to develop their ICT skills. Pupils' basic literacy skills do not consistently develop at a good rate. This is because the curriculum does not always provide enough opportunities for them to practise skills as part of work in other subjects. Although a suitable range of support programmes are in place to boost the progress of pupils working below the national average levels of attainment, opportunities to challenge and extend the thinking of the more able pupils, either as an integral part of opportunities in day-to-day lessons or beyond the classroom, are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Staff know their pupils well and ensure a good quality of day-to-day care. Pupils feel well cared for and say that, if they are worried, there is someone on hand to help. Procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils are adequate and are currently being reviewed and strengthened. Parents particularly appreciate the high priority given to supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective partnerships with parents and with support agencies, along with the extra support in school, ensure that these pupils are fully included and make similar progress to their peers. Teachers regularly assess all their pupils, and are clear about the standards they have reached. Peaks and troughs in pupils' learning are sometimes overlooked, however, because the systems used to track progress over time are still developing. Some pupils are getting increasingly involved in

understanding what their next learning steps are and assessing this for themselves. These developments, however, are not yet applied consistently well in all classes, and opportunities to suggest how pupils might improve their work further through marking, are sometimes missed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has been absent for several long periods. As a result, some staff are currently performing temporary roles, and there is a sense of uncertainty about their responsibilities. The acting headteacher works hard to track pupils' progress and to check the performance of the school. She shoulders much of the responsibility for doing so herself, however, because other leaders, managers and governors are not entirely sure about what they have to do and some do not yet have the skills they need to make an effective contribution. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher is ensuring that teaching and learning continues to improve and there are signs that pupils' progress has started to accelerate. The effective partnerships with nearby schools, the sharing of good teaching practices amongst staff and regular checking of the quality of lessons are all contributing to a steadily improving picture. Since the previous inspection, provision in the Foundation Stage and for ICT has strengthened. Governors play a key role in supporting improvement. They give careful consideration to managing the financial implications of a falling roll and have facilitated a number of developments to the schools accommodation. These improvements, along with the more challenging targets and closer eye that is being kept on pupils' progress demonstrates that, even in these unsettling times, there is the satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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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 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 3 |

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

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---|
| 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 | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 |
| 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? | 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 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 |

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

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You were polite, keen to talk to us and answered our questions thoughtfully. Your behaviour, particularly in your lessons and assembly was good. It is good to hear that you know there is always someone to help you if you have a problem. This is because all the adults care about you.

I particularly enjoyed joining in your assembly, hearing your school band playing Christmas carols and seeing just how proud you are of the certificates and rewards you receive when you have done something well. You showed me how grown up you can be when doing your special jobs around the school. I particularly enjoyed watching you rehearsing your Nativity Play. It is because you have chances like these, that you become more and more confident as you move through the school. This prepares you well for going to secondary school. These are some of the reasons why many of you told me that you enjoy school and why most of your parents told me they are pleased with it, too.

Your school is a satisfactory school. You do as well as children in most other schools by the time you leave at the end of Year 6. Children in Reception, however, do very well indeed. There are a few things in your school that could be better. To help you further, we have asked your acting headteacher and staff to make sure that:

- you learn at an even faster rate between Years 1 and 6
- you always have work that is just right for you - never too hard or too easy
- adults keep a closer check on how quickly you are learning, and whether you are on track to reach your learning targets
- your acting headteacher and all the other staff share the responsibility for checking how good your school is and what needs to be done to make it better.

You can help your school by making sure that you tell your teachers if your work is too hard or too easy, and by asking them how you are doing with reaching your learning targets. Of course, you should continue to try your best in everything that you do.

I wish you all the very best for the future and hope that your Christmas performances went well.