

# The Friars Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105896
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	308976
<b>Inspection date</b>	29 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Frank Carruthers

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	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The local authority
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Patricia Arnold
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 June 2003
<b>School address</b>	Cannon Street Salford Lancashire M3 7EU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 8324664
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 8352915

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following aspects: pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 and in writing across all classes, procedures to promote good attendance, and the leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, discussions with members of the senior leadership team, the vice chair of governors, pupils, some parents and other staff, as well as a scrutiny of school documents and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in as much detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments as given in its self-evaluation form were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Almost all pupils in this average sized primary school are of White British heritage. A few are from minority ethnic backgrounds and are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is above average and includes pupils with moderate learning difficulties, for whom the school is specifically resourced. The school holds the Healthy Schools and Eco-Schools Bronze Awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

The school provides a good education for its pupils and has outstanding features. These are: the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2; the care, guidance and support provided for pupils and the resultant high standard of behaviour; and the commitment of staff at all levels to promoting the potential of all pupils, whatever their needs.

Pupils achieve well. From levels of attainment that are well below average on entry to the Nursery, they reach standards in Year 6 that are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. This is achieved through good quality teaching, rigorous assessment of how well pupils are doing and excellent marking of their work so that the pupils learn how to improve. Progress is best in Key Stage 2 classes, but has been inconsistent in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been generally below or well below average. Standards are adversely affected in some years by the high proportion of pupils with additional needs in Year 2. Nevertheless, not all pupils in the past have been achieving as well as they might, so the school, well supported by the local authority (LA), has set about remedying this with new initiatives to promote better writing and to improve problem solving in mathematics. Their impact is beginning to be evident, for instance in the progress made by pupils in Year 2 last year, but is yet to be fully felt and requires consolidation. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates and some make very good progress in Key Stage 2 thanks to the high quality support they receive from staff in the resourced learning base. The very few pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress and quickly become fluent in the language.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils enjoy school very much, behave exceptionally well and develop an excellent awareness of how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. They speak enthusiastically about lessons, for instance the investigations they do in science. Pupils help to make the school an enjoyable and safe place to be, for example through their roles as school councillors and monitors. They develop the essential skills of cooperative behaviour and independence in learning, which help them when they begin secondary education. The great majority of pupils attend regularly and are punctual to school. However, despite the considerable efforts of staff and good support from the LA, levels of attendance remain below the national average. The biggest factors in this have been parents taking pupils on holiday during term time and the poor attendance of a small core of pupils. Irregular attendance has had an adverse impact on these pupils' learning.

The quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum is good with outstanding features. Relationships among staff and pupils are very good so that pupils listen well and readily join in discussions. Since the last inspection, staff have focused on and improved the quality of pupils' speaking skills and now pupils are articulate and keen to give their opinion. Throughout the school, classrooms and shared spaces are enhanced with excellent, informative displays that include pupils' work and information about targets. These encourage all pupils to have high expectations and pride in their accomplishments. Teaching assistants make a big contribution to all aspects of pupils' learning, especially in teaching additional programmes of work in English and mathematics.

The curriculum has a very strong emphasis on developing the core skills of English and mathematics and members of the senior management team, such as the mathematics coordinator,

use their expertise very well to develop schemes of work individual to the school. Personal, social and health education makes a very good contribution to the pupils' emotional development and understanding of how to lead a healthy and fit lifestyle. In addition, there are interesting themed days and weeks in which topics are explored with a wide range of events, trips and activities. There is an extensive range of clubs and activities after school and two valuable residential trips for pupils.

The care, guidance and support provided for all pupils are outstanding. The work of the learning mentor is very effective in supporting vulnerable pupils and their families. Partnerships with other schools, parents and external agencies are good and have significant benefit for pupils. Parents report that their children enjoy school and the staff are warm and welcoming. They are confident their views are taken into account and the overwhelming majority endorse the view of one who wrote, 'This is a superb school, which always responds to the needs and concerns of children and parents in a sensitive, appropriate manner.' The school has responded well to a key issue in the last inspection report to improve assessment, and has developed very good systems to keep track of pupils' achievement. Staff now quickly identify any signs of underachievement and then intervene with group work and one-to-one support.

Leadership, management and governance are good. There is outstanding leadership by the headteacher, a senior leadership team that has considerable leadership and management skills and an efficient governing body. School self-evaluation is effective and involves governors and staff well. The school's views match many of the judgements of this inspection, though it has overestimated its view of the school's overall effectiveness because the full impact of the senior leaders' work is yet to be felt in terms of improving pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1. Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress and it has good capacity to improve. It provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery class with skills that are well below the levels expected for their age, especially in speech and language. They are well cared for and staff expectations for their progress are good, especially in relation to their personal, social and emotional development, in which area they make most progress. Children become confident, choosing activities and enjoying helping. They make good progress, though by the end of the Reception year their skills are still below national expectations in relation to the key areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Recent changes to the organisation in the Foundation Stage mean that staff plan the activities together, providing better opportunities for the children in the Reception class. All areas of learning are covered well both in the shared indoor areas and outdoors. The Foundation Stage is well managed and organised. The transition in to the Nursery and on to Year 1 is satisfactory overall, but there is scope for improving the access to the available resources by pupils in Year 1 in order to help those for whom the Foundation Stage curriculum is still appropriate.

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

- Consolidate the initiatives that are helping to raise standards in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Raise the awareness of all parents to the importance of regular attendance, especially the few who do not encourage their children to attend and those who continually take time away from school for holidays.

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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	1
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	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?	1

<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	1
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	1
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**

Inspection of The Friars Primary School, Salford, M3 7EU

I would like to thank you very much for your help when I inspected your school. I enjoyed my visit very much. Now I would like to share with you what I thought about your school.

Yours is a good school and has some outstanding features.

- The staff take excellent care of you all and teach you well.
- You enjoy school and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You make excellent progress in English, mathematics and science from Year 3 to Year 6.
- The staff arrange a rich range of activities for you to enjoy in lessons, after-school clubs and on residential trips.
- Your headteacher is an outstanding leader for the school.

To make the school even better, there are two things to do and you can help.

- The staff have introduced some very good ways to help you learn to read, write and solve problems in mathematics. They need to build on these and help you, especially those of you who are in Years 1 and 2, to make good progress.
- It is very important that you all attend school regularly, so we want the staff to get this message over to your parents: pupils who miss school regularly or who go on holidays in term time often fall behind in their work.

So come on, beat your class targets for attendance, work hard in all your subjects and carry on enjoying school!