

# Micklehurst All Saints CofE Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106235
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	309064
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	133
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Wendy Thompson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs G Barratt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	The Rowans Mossley Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL5 9DR
<b>Telephone number</b>	01457 832128
<b>Fax number</b>	01457 832121

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This small school serves a socially mixed community that has significant areas of deprivation. After a period during which pupil numbers fell they are now rising, but there is considerable variation in the numbers in different year groups. The majority of pupils are White British but a small number, most of whom are Bangladeshi, belong to minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive a free school meal is well above average. The proportion that has learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Since the last inspection the school has had significant changes in staffing. The internally appointed acting deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher took up their posts in January 2008. The headteacher is leaving in March 2008.

## 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 in which pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning and make good progress. Staff know pupils very well as individuals and are committed to helping them grow in confidence and realise their potential. Parents express their appreciation of the school with comments such as, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds' and, 'The children are confident and happy and their achievements have a lot to do with this.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Very few children join the school with the expected skills for their age: most have difficulty forming relationships and their all-round skills are below or well below those usually shown by children of similar age. Results at the end of Key Stage 2 have been on a rising trend since 2003 when they were well below average. In 2007, Year 6 pupils' achievement was outstanding and they reached exceptionally high standards overall. However, with the small numbers involved and varying levels of ability, overall figures can fluctuate between year groups. Currently, standards in Year 6 are closer to average. At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Standards here have risen since the last inspection, but are still not high enough, especially in writing.

Pupils' good personal development makes a strong contribution to the creation of the school's happy learning environment. Staff act as excellent role models through the interest that they show in individuals and the high quality pastoral support and good overall guidance that they offer. This fosters pupils' self-esteem so that they, in turn, want to help others and play their part in all that the school provides. As some commented, 'We are all one family.' Pupils are unfailingly polite and generally behave well. Their keen interest in healthy living is shown in the popularity of the break-time snack shop and the school's recent acquisition of the Activemark for physical education. Pupils understand about keeping safe, both physically and emotionally. Their self-confidence and positive attitudes to learning mean that they leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

While they are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, a number of parents are understandably concerned about the many changes of staff that have occurred since the last inspection. However, due to highly skilful and determined leadership and management, the changes have not had a negative impact on pupils' learning. This, in response to the overall quality of teaching, is good. Teachers and support staff work well together to ensure that they provide pupils with activities that engage their interest as well as extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Class teachers are making increasingly good use of assessment information to guide their planning and they use praise effectively, both to spur pupils to greater effort and to help those who find self-discipline difficult, to concentrate and behave. They mark pupils' work regularly, but do not make sufficiently clear precisely what they should do next to improve it. The good quality curriculum is relevant to pupils' interests and makes good use of local resources, but does not incorporate information and communication technology (ICT) enough to extend pupils' skills and add to their learning across a range of subjects.

It is only through the outstanding leadership of the headteacher that the school has made such good progress over the past five years and since the last inspection. The headteacher has successfully combined her analytical skills with great sensitivity to establish the systems and consistency of approach that have turned the school round. Parents praise the way that, 'The school has faced many challenges and responded to them positively, always with the interests of the children being most important.' Overall leadership and management are good, with the

increasingly well-informed governors providing both support and challenge. Despite this good leadership, the combination of staffing issues that have had financial consequences and the temporary status of the leadership team mean that the school's capacity to improve is only satisfactory.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development, communication and mathematical skills are all weak when they join the Nursery. In the well-structured, supportive Foundation Stage environment, they make good progress so that most enter Year 1 with overall skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. However, their communication and calculation skills still lag behind. The school is particularly successful at promoting children's personal development. Staff are observant, give clear directions and engage children well in conversation, allowing them plenty of time to think. This means children settle well, grow in confidence and increasingly collaborate with others. Activities related to all aspects of learning extend to the outside area. For example, individuals listened carefully to instructions that led them on a treasure hunt to specific places outside to collect pieces of card that they then assembled inside into a house. Effective leadership and management have formed a coherent unit and staff team over the past two years and introduced increasingly accurate methods to assess and monitor children's progress. The systems are being refined well but the information has yet to be used to full effect as a basis on which to build when children leave the Foundation Stage.

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

- Raise standards, especially in writing, at Key Stage 1.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and use of targets for pupils make clear to them what they need to do to improve their work.
- Use ICT across the curriculum as a tool for learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

After making good progress in the Foundation Stage, pupils consolidate their skills in Key Stage 1. End of Year 2 results in 2007 were average for reading, below average in mathematics, but well below average in writing. The most successful group of pupils was that for whom English is an additional language, who achieved well above average results in reading and mathematics but only average levels in writing. To improve standards the school is paying particular attention to developing pupils' ability to link letters to sounds, but these efforts have yet to translate themselves into results. At Key Stage 2, the school's actions in response to significantly below average results in 2006 had a remarkable impact in 2007. Year 6 pupils reached well above average standards in English and exceptionally high standards in science and mathematics, with well above average numbers in each subject reaching the higher Level 5. Pupils' impressive progress from Year 2 placed the school among the most successful in the country, with all groups achieving well. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils make consistently good progress in response to good quality teaching and an interesting curriculum. From their well below average results in Year 2, current Year 6 pupils are achieving well to be working at broadly average levels.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils' main reasons for describing their school as, 'fantastic and exciting' are that, 'Teachers make lessons interesting' and 'If you want to be friends with people, they don't say no.' Pupils understand that it is satisfying to think of and share things with others. They collaborate well, encourage others to join in their games and, for example, generously collect equipment such as books and pencils for a Nursery school in The Gambia. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as is their behaviour. They smilingly hold doors open for others and lessons run smoothly. School council members have good ideas about how to make the school a better place: older pupils efficiently organise the hall for assemblies and run the snack and stationery shops. Attendance levels are above average. During the inspection almost half the pupils from Reception to Year 6 gained awards in assembly for attendance above 98%, which they then proudly shared with someone of their choice whilst making their way back to their places. Such activities help pupils to develop a sense of community as well as the good learning habits and high self-esteem necessary for success in the next stage of their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers plan their lessons carefully, paying particular attention to the individual needs of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and they are well organised. They mostly deliver lessons in a lively manner with good pace and are skilful at managing behaviour. The result is that pupils settle well to work, understand what needs to be done and try hard. They share ideas well with others, use whiteboards well to make notes and are confident to explain their thinking. Teaching assistants throughout the school play a useful, integral role in lessons. On occasion, the pace is slower and teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for higher ability pupils. This means that they sometimes sit unoccupied. Effective use of interactive whiteboards, by both teachers and pupils, adds variety, clarity and fun. For example, when investigating the properties of different materials, pupils were enthralled by the magnified images of a paper towel and understood that the pockets that, as one said, 'looked like caves' were the reason behind its absorbent qualities. All adults support pupils well in lessons and teachers mark their work encouragingly. They identify its good features but do not provide sufficiently clear guidance about how to improve it, or refer back to previous comments or targets.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

Good use of visits to local places of interest and a wide range of visitors captures pupils' imagination and brings their learning to life. The curriculum is regularly adapted to ensure all pupils, who are taught in mixed-age classes that vary from year to year, cover what is required. With an eye to developing pupils' all-round skills, the school makes good links between subjects such as history, geography, English and mathematics. However, despite much improved resources since the last inspection, it does not make sufficient use of ICT across other subjects: there is little evidence even of pupils using word processing. The school uses assessment information well to provide individual and group support for those who need an extra boost. It promotes their personal development very well both in school and through such activities as the 'Respect

in the Community' project in collaboration with the police. Good links with the local secondary school support performing arts and sport. Pupils greatly enjoy the wide range of very popular extra-curricular activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Parental comments such as, 'Instead of my child being frightened of failing, he has love, time, patience and kindness showered over him so he is now excited, confident and eager to go to school and try new things', eloquently encapsulate the high quality of pastoral care and support provided by the school. Staff are fully aware of pupils' individual needs and pupils are happy to approach them with concerns because they know they will receive help. Arrangements are in place to promote child protection, health and safety. Careful diagnosis and tailored support, including that of outside agencies, ensure that those for whom English is an additional language or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress alongside their peers. Adults guide pupils' work well in lessons but pupils are somewhat vague about their individual targets, which currently only apply to mathematics, and are not always clear exactly how to improve their own work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The exceptional headteacher instils all those who work in the school with her own commitment to providing the best for pupils and enables them to develop the skills to put that vision into practice. The staff are knitted together as a team with a clear sense of direction. Increasingly sharp assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress informs all the school's work. For example, the identification of weaknesses in pupils' ability to articulate scientific concepts and staff's subsequent actions, led to a marked improvement in pupils' achievement in 2007. Frequent changes in senior and middle managers have slowed the potential rate of improvement but regular reiteration of school systems and expectations has achieved consistency of approach. Training, both formal and through hands-on practice, has provided those with responsibilities, including governors, with the confidence to lead change and to question its impact on pupils' personal and academic achievement. The school sets itself challenging targets and is successful in achieving them. It runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis but, mainly due to unavoidable staff absences, is costly to operate. It provides satisfactory value for money within a welcoming, happy community in which pupils thrive.

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## 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	3

### 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	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	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

<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	3
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 me feel so welcome and for being so unfailingly polite when I visited your school recently. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at All Saints and am pleased to tell you that I agree with you and your parents that it is a good school. I would like to share with you the reasons for this.

Yours is a very happy school where you all try hard to get on well with each other and to understand that everyone deserves respect and friendship. You are good at helping each other and you concentrate well in lessons. Your teachers plan interesting activities to help you learn and they give you plenty of support and time to think so you are confident to try things out. All the above help you to make good progress in your learning. You have lots of opportunities to meet visitors related to your work and to visit local places of interest, like Portland Basin Museum. You also have a good range of activities to do after school - the dance group that I saw were really enjoying their energetic work out! All staff in school work very hard to understand you as individuals and to help you grow in confidence. Your headteacher, senior teachers and governors are good at knowing how to improve things.

To help make your school even better, I have suggested that teachers help pupils in Years 1 and 2 to reach higher standards, especially in writing, and that, when they mark your work and give you targets, all teachers make clear to you how you can improve it. I have also suggested that your teachers should find more ways for you to use computers when you are working.

Your job will be to continue to attend regularly and to behave as well and enjoy learning as much as you do now.