

Mottram CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106237
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309065
Inspection date	11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	134
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Philip Burrows
Headteacher	Mrs J Chapman
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 1998
School address	War Hill Mottram Hyde Cheshire SK14 6JL
Telephone number	01457 763368
Fax number	01457 765154

Age group	4-11
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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 issues: the standards achieved and pupils' progress; the quality of teaching and learning, including the systems to assess and monitor pupils' progress; and the quality of leadership and management at all levels. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; discussions with senior members of staff, pupils, three governors and parents; and 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 small school serves a semi-rural, socially and economically mixed area on the edge of the Pennines. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils eligible to receive a free school meal is low. Below average numbers have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are five mixed age classes. In 2007 the school achieved the Active Mark, Investors in People status and the Work/Life Balance model award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Pupils, parents and staff say they feel, 'very proud, lucky and privileged', to belong to it. Pupils like it because, 'The whole school is a team where everyone helps and encourages each other.' Parents commend the leaders' 'vision and drive that place great emphasis on developments that have an impact on children'. Staff say that, 'It is a fantastic place to work where the children are happy and successful too.'

Children enter their Reception year with skills that are broadly as expected for their age but with relatively weak early reading and writing skills. For the past four years, Year 6 pupils have reached overall standards that are significantly above those achieved nationally. In 2007 standards in English, mathematics and science were all exceptionally high and in English and mathematics the proportion gaining the higher Level 5 was more than double the national average. Pupils make excellent progress, especially in Key Stage 2, in response to consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching. The school's success is also shown in the way that pupils achieve highly in areas that are not tested. Standards in information and communication technology are above average and pupils' vibrant artwork enhances the learning environment. Pupils are the local authority tag rugby champions and have been hockey champions of the north-west for two years running, despite the school's small size and the fact that physical education was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection.

Pupils' exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures that the school has a supportive family atmosphere in which everyone is respected and has the confidence to make a contribution. Members of the school council are currently planning how they will raise funds for their chosen charity. Playground buddies obviously enjoy using their initiative to involve younger pupils in games. Pupils of all ages, ethnicity and abilities form excellent relationships. They know the importance of, in their words, 'making friends, not breaking friends' and collaborate extremely well in lessons. They appreciate staff's kindness and will openly share any problems with them certain that help will be forthcoming. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Their excellent attendance demonstrates how greatly they enjoy school. They act very safely, including during the current internal building work, and healthy living is one of their highest priorities. Pupils leave the school extremely well equipped to make the most of their future opportunities.

Teachers' enthusiasm shines through their lessons. As pupils explained, 'They make things that sound boring, interesting and fun.' Clear directions, a brisk pace, probing questioning and patient explanations for those who find learning more difficult ensure that all pupils try hard and are proud of their work. As a result pupils of all abilities achieve very well. Recent improvements to the school's assessment and monitoring procedures mean that an increasingly clear picture is being built up of individuals' progress throughout the year. Well trained teaching assistants provide good quality support, including intensive, individual sessions for those in danger of falling behind. Teachers make highly effective comments to pupils in the classroom that encourage renewed efforts or thought. They also mark work supportively but they do not always identify sufficiently clearly the next steps that pupils need to take in order to improve their work. Teachers make good links between subjects, for example, detailed watercolours of fruit and vegetables enhance a science display related to healthy living, so that learning makes sense to pupils. They also make good use of the local area and provide a wealth of highly popular after-school clubs. Links with secondary schools support foreign language and sports teaching. The curriculum is rich and varied.

The mastermind behind the school's continual improvement and success is its dynamic and determined headteacher. Her high expectations of pupils' emotional development as well as their academic success are shared by all staff who work together as an unusually strong team. Those with leadership responsibilities carry them out with dedication and success. This is to be seen in pupils' consistently high standards and the many improvements since the last inspection, such as in the provision for music and for gifted and talented pupils. Staff welcome new ideas and their plentiful opportunities for professional development mean that they have the expertise to put them into practice and evaluate their effectiveness. The required procedures relating to child protection, health and safety are in place. High quality care, guidance and support for pupils help them flourish and mature into thoughtful, engaging young people who, in turn, value and encourage others. The governors give much time to the school and support it well. They have recently been influential in its new provision for sex and relationships education. This has caused friction with some parents but the great majority are delighted by the way the school both keeps them informed and fosters their children's all-round progress. The school runs very smoothly and provides excellent value for money. Its capacity for improvement is outstanding.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Over the past year the school has worked hard to improve provision in the Foundation Stage where children are now making good progress. In previous years children have generally moved into Year 1 with the expected skills for their age, having made satisfactory progress. The sharply analytical assessment of children's skills when they join Reception means that the teacher and assistant both have a good awareness of individuals' needs. This, combined with regular recording of incidental observations as well as more formal monitoring, ensures that activities are well adapted to provide both challenge and support. Daily language sessions are leading to children making rapid leaps forward in their ability to match sounds to letters and increasing their desire to experiment with writing. The outside area is now used for all areas of learning. During the inspection children were happily developing their physical skills while learning about road safety. Both members of staff give clear directions and respond well to children's responses so that they grow in confidence and enjoy their learning. Good quality leadership and management are moving the provision forward at a good pace.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers' marking makes clear to pupils precisely what they need to do to improve their work.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
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

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?	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
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

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

Inspection of Mottram Church of England Primary School, Mottram, Hyde, SK14 6JL

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave me when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my day at Mottram and was delighted to see what a great school you have. You told me that it is 'fantastic' and 'brilliant'. I agree with you and have judged it to be outstanding, which means it is among the best in the country. Below, I have outlined some of the many different things that helped me make this decision.

One of the most obvious strengths is the way that you all form such very good relationships with each other and staff. This means that you work and play together really well and are confident to ask for help if you need it. It was lovely to see what good role models the older pupils are for younger ones and how everyone encourages each other. Your behaviour is excellent and you clearly enjoy school a great deal. Your teachers organise interesting things for you to do, explain them clearly and give you lots of support so that you all make really good progress. This means that by the end of Year 6 you reach standards that are well above those achieved nationally. Your information and communication technology skills are good too and I was most impressed by all your sporting success.

Your headteacher is full of good ideas about how the school can improve and all the staff work together very well as a team in your best interests. I know that you greatly appreciate all the changes to the building, improvements to the computers, and the better provision for physical education. You now have targets to aim for in English and mathematics. I have suggested that, to help you even more, when they mark your work your teachers make absolutely clear the next steps you need to take in order to improve it.

I do hope that you continue to enjoy learning and to attend school as regularly as you do now.