

# St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School, Prestwich

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105342
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	317654
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Adrian Simm

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	230
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs C East
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr J Fish
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Rectory Lane Prestwich Manchester Lancashire M25 1BP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7733794
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7737307

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## Introduction

When St Mary's Church of England Aided Primary School was inspected in 2006, it was made subject to special measures because it was failing to provide a satisfactory education for its pupils. Subsequently, inspectors have visited the school on three occasions to monitor its progress. This inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size and serves the parish of St Mary's, although a good number of pupils travel from other areas. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. Around 13% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with just under 5% who speak English as an additional language. A very small number of pupils require support in learning to speak English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very few pupils have a statement of special educational need. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are what would be expected for their age. The current headteacher, appointed firstly as interim headteacher in January 2007, took up the post permanently in September 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and satisfactory value for money. When it was inspected in 2006, basic aspects of its work were not good enough: pupils' standards and achievement in reading, writing, mathematics and science; ways of tracking pupils' progress; monitoring the quality of provision so as to improve the quality of teaching and learning; and the capacity of leaders and managers to take appropriate action to secure improvement. There has been significant improvement in all of these areas in the last 12 months because of effective leadership and management. The part played by the new headteacher cannot be overstated. The school now has a wealth of information about pupils' progress which it analyses closely and responds to quickly, for example, where pupils' expected progress begins to slow. Seniors managers, subject coordinators and governors have all played their part effectively in turning the school around. For example, they have been involved in checking on the quality of teaching and learning and in making suggestions for improvement. The school is clear where it is up to on its pathway of improvement and what else needs to be done. The time is right for the school to analyse all of its information about the quality of school performance even more sharply to move on to the next level of all areas of teaching, learning and pupils' achievement. It has good capacity to do this.

Teaching and learning has strengthened considerably in Years 2 to 6. This has resulted in pupils in these year groups making satisfactory progress. They have caught up in their learning over the last 12 months. Current standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. A number of older pupils agreed with one who said, 'The work we are now given suits our needs much better than in previous years so there is much less talking now in lessons and we feel better when we work because we don't get so disheartened.' Progress in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 is not quite as strong and pupils progress satisfactorily. This is a significant part of the school and means that the impact of teaching and learning on standards, and pupils' achievement overall in the school, are satisfactory. Within this satisfactory picture, pupils' progress in writing has been identified correctly by the school as not quite as strong as in reading, particularly for higher attaining boys. Also, pupils' standards and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are rising from a low base, but they are not high enough. Improvement in ICT is being led by staff who have ensured they are competent in using new equipment.

Whilst the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' standards and achievement is satisfactory currently, it is strengthening. Improvements in the satisfactory curriculum are planned so that different strands, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are integrated fully into other subjects. More positively, the contribution of all staff to pupils' outstanding personal development is very strong. The care for pupils and the level of pastoral support is very strong. Pupils are encouraged to behave extremely well. Governors, who visit school regularly, comment on the high levels of respect pupils have for everyone. An extremely strong family atmosphere prevails. Pupils say they enjoy school life and this shows in their excellent attendance. They want to learn. The school population is culturally diverse and all pupils mature as young citizens alongside each other. They are extremely clear about keeping healthy and safe and join in wholeheartedly in the school's physical education and leisure activities. Good support from pupils as well as staff helps newcomers, including those for whom English is an additional language, settle in

swiftly and feel a valued member of the community. The school works well with a variety of outside agencies, which contributes to the provision of tailored support for individuals and helps to involve parents fully in their children's education. Educational consultants from the local authority have been instrumental in supporting staff training and helping the school to improve, and continue to be involved in developments in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Most children join the Nursery class with the skills expected for their age. During their two years in the Foundation Stage they make satisfactory progress so that they enter Year 1 with skills typical for children of their age in all areas of learning. Their skills are strongest in personal development. Since its last inspection the school has made much progress in developing its systems to assess and monitor children's skills development. It is now possible for staff to assess children's skills on entry and to identify those who are making slower or faster progress than expected. As yet, staff make few references in their planning to the needs of individuals and do not record as frequently as they could the small steps in progress that children make on a day-to-day basis. Staff generally lead focused activities effectively, adapting the work and their questioning suitably to cater for different abilities, but do not always capitalise fully on children's interests in order to further their learning. Currently no one person has a defined role as coordinator of the Foundation Stage. This hampers the capacity to provide clear leadership or to oversee and guide developments in practice throughout the key stage. Both Nursery and Reception classrooms have been refurbished recently to provide an improved and more interesting learning environment with specific areas for different activities and readily available resources. Nursery children can use the outside for all areas of learning, although plans have not yet come to fruition for the Reception children to have the same opportunity.

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

- Establish leadership and management in the Foundation Stage that can help to improve the provision, so that children's rate of progress and skill levels increase.
- Sharpen the use of available data on pupils' progress to ensure all pupils achieve well, particularly in the Foundation Stage and Year 1.
- Improve achievement in writing, particularly for higher attaining boys, and in ICT skills for all pupils.

A small proportion of the school's whose overall effectiveness is judged 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**

Levels by the end of Year 6 have fallen year-on-year from 2003 until 2006. By 2006, the more able pupils in particular were not achieving as well as they should and too many pupils did not reach the potential they showed at the end of Year 2. This is no longer the case. In 2007 Year 6 pupils reached standards that were above average in mathematics and science and average in English. This represented satisfactory achievement for this group of pupils from their above average standards at the end of Year 2. Currently, pupils throughout the school attain broadly average standards and achieve satisfactorily. This demonstrates good improvement in the last 12 months in Years 3 to 6 where pupils previously underachieved. Those who have learning

difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are more able build satisfactorily on their previous learning. This is true also for those who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language. However, writing skills could be stronger still and are recognised by the school as the next major area of improvement, particularly for higher attaining boys. Pupils' ICT skills are improving satisfactorily from a low base but standards are not yet high enough.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils are extremely polite to adults and respectful of each other and their school surroundings. They say they enjoy nearly everything they do. Pupils revel in the opportunities they are given to be independent and to show they have extremely good self-control. Pupils understand each other's social and cultural needs very well. In lessons they ask questions that focus on what they know they need to do to improve, showing their awareness of their levels of learning. An understanding of healthy eating is promoted very well through the curriculum and less formally at meal and breaktimes. Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 pupils benefit from the fruit that is offered. Pupils enjoy an active lifestyle in physical education lessons, sporting competitions and organised lunchtime activities, which have developed extremely well since the last inspection. Attendance is excellent: it is higher than the national average and is improving year-on-year. In lessons, there is a strengthening picture of pupils who behave impeccably, which allows teachers to teach and pupils to learn. The school council works extremely hard on behalf of other pupils. Its members are particularly proud of the outdoor and adventure playground equipment they were integral in achieving. Pupils are maturing into very good citizens. Given that pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are now progressing well in Years 2 to 6 and their understanding of enterprise skills is good, for example, in organising independently fundraising events, overall, pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education. All of the pupils' strengths in personal development combine extremely well in ensuring an exceptionally high level of spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching is generally stronger in Years 2 to 6. Here staff use their good awareness of pupils' progress to fill any gaps in their knowledge and to provide challenge for pupils regardless of their ability. However, there is still room for improvement where teachers are working with the class as a whole, such as the opening sections of mathematics lessons. Differentiated work here is not yet strong enough. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage and Year 1 moves more slowly so that they sometimes have to sit a little too long listening whilst everyone has a turn or while the teacher explains each group's task to everybody. This means that the more able pupils are not always fully stretched and those who need more help do not receive it quickly enough. Throughout school, teachers mark pupils' work regularly and supportively. In literacy and numeracy they also provide helpful pointers for improvement, although these are not always worded sufficiently precisely to be of maximum benefit to pupils. Teachers in every year group form very good quality relationships with their pupils and create a happy, orderly environment in which children want to learn. Teaching assistants are clear about what they are expected to do and successfully support those who find learning more difficult.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum includes all subjects expected for pupils of this age and additional activities that enrich the curriculum. For example, visits to the local library, links with St Mary's Church, science visits to the local park for environmental projects and further afield on heritage and cultural trips which link clearly to the curriculum. Enterprise and personal development are encouraged well through pupils organising fundraising events and being given day-to-day responsibilities around the school. However, the school recognises that different strands of the curriculum, such as literacy, numeracy and ICT, are not integrated into other subjects as fully as they should be to achieve fully 'joined up' learning. The school identified this itself and have plans in place to move this on. This is a good example of how the school's monitoring and evaluation works in practice.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school cares for its pupils very well. The good quality of pastoral care noted at the last inspection has strengthened and is now complemented by good systems to check on pupils' progress and achievement. These improved systems help the school to know quickly what else needs to be done for all pupils to progress more individually, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils and parents both speak very positively about the targets in English and mathematics that have been introduced over recent months. They appreciate that because teachers now assess pupils' work frequently, they can guide each pupil about what steps they need to take next to improve. Discussion between the pupil and teacher before the target changes means that pupils are becoming increasingly involved in their own learning. Checking accurately on pupils' progress in the Foundation Stage is in its infancy with more work to be done. A family ethos prevails in school with clear expectations of pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Child protection arrangements are in place. Health and safety systems are effective and ensure pupils feel safe and well cared for. The school council takes seriously its responsibility for contributing to monitoring of the school site and keeping it safe.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, staff and governors are playing their full part in driving on with improvements. All staff continue to be enthusiastic and motivated. The clear vision and planning by the headteacher, senior staff and subject coordinators means there is an increasing consistency in the quality of provision within different subjects and across the age and ability range of the pupils. The leadership and management responsibility for the Foundation Stage has yet to be clarified to give this important area of the school the basis upon which to move on more quickly. The data the school has amassed are very useful for tracking pupils' progress and identifying areas for further development. The regular focus on checking pupils' progress immediately flags where extra support is needed. Senior staff check to see if strategies agreed by staff are followed consistently. Whilst the school evaluates pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning well, its systems for doing this could be a little sharper in improving the school further. Governors are much clearer about the strengths of provision and are increasingly involved in making strategic decisions and checking on their impact. They gain insight using a range of

methods including detailed reports from the headteacher, direct monitoring of school life and discussion with subject coordinators. It is clear that all staff are implementing strategies for the long-term future of the pupils.



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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?	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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	2

### 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?	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	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	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 contributing so positively to the inspection, which Mrs Drake and I carried out recently. The way the school council is organised and your involvement in school life are something I know you are proud of. Well done. Twelve months ago your school needed extra help to improve, but this is no longer the case. I hope you will pass on my thanks to the rest of the pupils and staff about how well you are all improving everything that happens at St Mary's. I know from what you said to us that you recognise how much better your education is now compared to a year ago. Those parents who happened to speak to Mrs Drake on parents' evening also gave us the same message.

We were very impressed with how well you all get on with each other, the effort you put into your work, how proud you all are of the improvements you make and how very clear you are as pupils about what else you need to do to improve. We think you are extremely well cared for by staff who want you to learn as much as you can. Your headteacher, staff and governors have worked really hard to improve what is offered to you.

To build on this, we have asked your school to strengthen a few areas.

- To appoint a leader for the Foundation Stage who will have the special job of ensuring that the Nursery and Reception classes work even more closely together to improve children's progress.
- Your school has worked very hard to discover how well you are doing in your work and what else you need to do to progress even more. Staff need to be just that bit clearer now about how to take the next steps in making their teaching and your learning even better.
- Your progress in writing needs to move on more quickly, particularly that of the boys who are able to reach really high standards. Also, all of you need to improve your skills more rapidly in ICT.

I can tell you are ready for this challenge to improve even more.