

# Irlam Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105898
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	324290
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Kidd

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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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 (total)	380
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr K Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs V Ruddy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Liverpool Road Irlam Manchester Lancashire M44 6NA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7752015
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7760313

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a mixed area, but one in which there is primarily owner-occupied housing. Most pupils are White British and there are few pupils from minority ethnic groups and who are new to learning English. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who have a statement of special educational needs is below average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery and two Reception classes. There is an after-school club on site, which is run by a private provider and did not form part of this inspection. Irlam Primary is an accredited Dyslexia Friendly School and also has the Quality Mark and Healthy School awards.

## 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' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school does for their sons and daughters and make particular mention of the positive impact of dyslexia-friendly status. They are also very positive about how effectively the school prepares pupils for the transition to secondary education. Pupils enjoy coming to Irlam Primary and are very proud to tell visitors just how good their school is!

Children enter the Nursery with skills which are broadly expected for their age. They achieve well across the school and reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. As a result of the school's emphasis on focused phonics teaching in Key Stage 1, pupils' skills in reading and writing are improving apace. Standards in English in Key Stage 2 are also higher than previously and increasing numbers of pupils are attaining at Level 5. However, their progress in mathematics is not quite as good as in English and science, and fewer pupils reach the higher levels in this subject in Years 2 and 6.

Pupils behave very well indeed and show a high level of concern for the welfare of their classmates and for younger pupils. They support each other willingly and are also not afraid to give visitors advice on how to eat healthily. The school council represents pupils' views with confidence and 'playground pals' and prefects accept responsibility willingly, ensuring that no-one is lonely at break and lunchtime. Pupils were responsible for designing the railings and play equipment in a neighbouring park, they support a range of charities and school music groups play in the local and wider community.

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of outstanding practice in Key Stage 2. Teachers use the electronic whiteboard effectively as a teaching and learning tool and pupils have many opportunities to use computers for personal research and to present their work. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities are fully involved in lesson activities and teaching assistants provide sensitive support for pupils who sometimes find the work difficult. As a result, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.

The curriculum meets the needs, interests and aspirations of the vast majority of pupils and teachers work successfully to encourage their pupils to see the links between different subjects. Literacy is taught across a range of subjects, history and geography for example, and pupils' standards in English are rising as a result. Pupils benefit from a variety of enrichment activities, visits and visitors and have a good awareness of the cultural and religious diversity in modern Britain.

Care, support and guidance for pupils are good and are recognised as such by parents, who comment, 'Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and take time to encourage and praise them. The welfare of pupils is a key priority for the school.'

Leadership and management are good and all staff share the same vision for the school's development. There is a strong commitment to improvement in all areas and the school's evaluation of performance is honest and generally accurate. However, data on pupils' progress is not always used sharply enough to ensure that pupils' academic targets are sufficiently challenging or that pupils clearly understand how to reach them.

Good achievement over time, outstanding personal development of pupils and strong leadership and management demonstrate that the school has good capacity for further improvement and that it provides good value for money.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children enter the Nursery with broadly average skills for their age, but there are increasing numbers with speech and language difficulties. They achieve well across the Early Years Foundation Stage overall, particularly in counting, calculation and reading, and their progress accelerates during the Reception year. The quality of teaching is good and children are encouraged to take increased responsibility for their learning. As a result, they enjoy learning through 'doing' and are already becoming more confident in the use of subject-specific vocabulary. Children in Reception, for example, explain how different metals can attract by using the word 'magnetic' and they explain to visitors what they are reading by saying, 'This is a fable.'

Children's personal and emotional development is exceptionally good. Their behaviour is excellent, they get on very well with each other and have good relationships with their teachers and support assistants. They work and play together happily, but do not have sufficient opportunities to reinforce their learning by play and investigation outdoors. Planning for learning outside the classroom is not specific enough. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and the quality of display in both the Nursery and Reception is high. Because the welfare requirements for Early Years Foundation Stage are fully met, parents are positive about how well their children are cared for and say that they are helped to grow in both knowledge and confidence.

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

- Increase the numbers of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in mathematics in both key stages.
- Sharpen the use of progress data to ensure pupils' targets are consistently challenging enough and that pupils know what they have to do to attain them.
- Ensure that all Early Years Foundation Stage children benefit from more effective learning through continuous access to outdoor provision.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress across the school and overall standards have been above average at the end of Key Stage 2 since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence shows that attainment in English is improving markedly and that increasing numbers of pupils are reaching Level 5 in this subject. Similarly, pupils' reading, writing and communication skills are improving in Key Stage 1 as a result of the school's focused teaching of phonics for targeted groups. However, pupils' progress in mathematics lags behind that in English and science. Although standards remain above average in this subject, insufficient numbers of pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

The school's impressive work on providing dyslexia friendly materials for its pupils and the strong support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive from teachers and teaching assistants mean that all groups of pupils make the same good progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils are very proud of their school and regard it as, in their words, 'A great school which is energetic and smart.' They enjoy everything the school has to offer and their attendance is consistently above average. Punctuality is excellent and pupils enter in the morning with smiling faces, eager for the day ahead. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is of the highest order and music, drama and art feature prominently in all areas of the school. Displays, for example, are outstanding and pupils are only too willing to show visitors the work they have done, particularly when it involves the use of computers, which is popular in all key stages.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school site is impeccable and pupils treat their peers, the adults who work with them and visitors with the utmost courtesy. They say that bullying and racism are rare and that if they do occur they are dealt with swiftly and effectively by their teachers who, they add, 'are always there to help us'. The school council enjoys a high reputation among its constituents and continues to play a significant role in ensuring that pupils are fully aware of how to eat sensibly and have a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' support for a wide range of local, national and global charities is a byword and they are particularly proud of the money they collected to help build a school in a village in Ghana. Good achievement in their academic subjects and the strong emphasis the school places on preparing them for secondary school mean that pupils are well equipped for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teachers are well prepared, have secure subject knowledge and treat their pupils with respect and dignity. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are a major strength and pupils enjoy supporting each other in pairs and groups. In the best lessons, levels of challenge are high and teachers' questions require pupils to think more deeply about the subject matter and encourage them to give reasons for their answers. For example, pupils of all abilities in Year 6 can give perceptive comments about the science experiments they are conducting and also speak with confidence about how they are planning PowerPoint presentations on Ancient Egypt. Similarly, pupils in Year 5 give quite complex examples of metaphors and explain with accuracy how similes may be formed. The school recognises, however, that more needs to be done to increase challenge in mathematics and that, in some lessons, learning is too teacher directed. Nonetheless, the key feature of all teaching is the inclusion of pupils of all abilities in everything lessons have to offer.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

An increasing emphasis on encouraging pupils to see links between subjects and on fostering their literacy skills in all lessons are strong elements of the curriculum. However, a similar approach to teaching mathematics is not fully embedded. The well-planned personal, social and health education programme makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils speak highly of the wide range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and sport open to them and particularly enjoy the annual residential experience. Visitors to the school enrich the curriculum: there are good connections with local churches and representatives

of a variety of faiths reinforce pupils' understanding of religions and cultures different to their own. Information and communication technology (ICT) plays a prominent part in learning and pupils' skills are developing well as a result.

The school has most effectively addressed the issue from the previous inspection in relation to the length of lessons in Key Stage 1 by altering the length of the school day. Pupils now benefit from shorter, more focused lessons in the afternoon.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Pastoral care is very impressive and teaching assistants are used more effectively to support pupils' progress in lessons than at the time of the previous inspection. Links with parents to ensure the well-being of their offspring are well established and parents are very positive about their impact. As they say, 'There is an "open door" policy and teachers always have time to listen to our concerns. As a result, our children grow in confidence.' Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those regarded as vulnerable are supported very effectively and as a result make the same progress as their peers. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and fully meet current guidelines.

The quality of academic guidance is inconsistent. Marking, for example, is variable in quality. It is sometimes outstanding, with detailed comment on how pupils can improve their work, but this is not sustained in all areas of the school. Similarly, although many pupils are aware of their targets, many are not sure what they need to do to reach them.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher displays impressive management skills and she is supported well by a talented senior leadership team. Their work ensures good teamwork among staff and a shared vision for how the school is to develop. Middle leaders, for example, are well informed and strongly committed to improving all areas of school life.

Above average standards and good achievement have been maintained over several years and staff are deployed appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils; provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is particularly good. The promotion of pupils' personal development is strong and pupils benefit from many opportunities to take responsibility and to show initiative. The strong links with local schools, the many visitors from different faiths and cultures and the pupils' support for a range of local initiatives show that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

Governors have good links with staff and subjects. They are regularly involved in lesson observations and in the scrutiny of pupils' work. They are fully supportive of the school but challenge the leadership with rigour when they feel the need to do so.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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

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

Thank you all so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us at lunchtime on Tuesday and to the pupils who played their musical instruments so beautifully during the achievement assembly on Wednesday. I would like to tell you the good things about your school.

You are right to be proud of Irlam Primary because it is a good school and your teachers and teaching assistants care and look after you well. You also look after each other and the school council, playground pals and team captains do much to make sure that everyone is happy and enjoys school. Your behaviour in lessons and around school is excellent and you are so polite and welcoming to visitors.

You make good progress in your lessons because your teachers teach you well and because teaching assistants give a lot of support to those of you who sometimes find the work difficult. You get many opportunities to use computers and you told me that there is also a wide range of interesting clubs that you can attend and trips organised for you.

Your headteacher and all the other staff work hard to make Irlam what it is and they are always looking for ways to improve the school. I have asked them, therefore, to do three things to make your school even better.

Firstly, to make sure that more of you reach the higher levels in mathematics in both key stages. Secondly, for teachers to use the information on how well you are doing in your work more sharply to give you really challenging targets and to help you to reach them. Finally, to ensure that all the children in the Nursery and Reception have more opportunities to learn outdoors.

Thank you again for your wonderful contribution to the inspection. Please keep on looking after each other and enjoying school.