

# St James CofE Primary School, Ashton-under-Lyne

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106231
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	324354
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 January 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Philip Cole

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	210
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 Tony Gelsthorpe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs V Marsh
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 June 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>	Romney Street Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL6 9HU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 3302008

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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**Fax number**

0161 3302008

**Age group** 3-11

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement and standards across the school, the effectiveness of teaching and the effectiveness of leaders in tackling any inconsistencies. Evidence was gathered from national published data, the school's own assessment and evaluation records, school documentation, observations of lessons, pupils' completed work and interviews with pupils, staff and three governors. The views of parents were also taken into account through the parents' questionnaire. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but on the whole inspectors 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 is a smaller than average school which serves a town centre area of higher than average social need: the number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Half the pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds with most being of Asian Heritage. About half of these pupils enter school at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) includes Nursery and Reception age children. The provision is based on a separate site close to the school. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools and Inclusion 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. 'A school to be proud of' sums up the views of many parents. They are delighted with the high levels of care and how well the school promotes their children's confidence. They also praise the way the school celebrates the multicultural nature of the community, the excellent clubs and the good teaching that enables their children to make good progress. Pupils share their parents' enthusiasm. They talk enthusiastically about the exciting things they do, both in and out of school, including holiday time activities and in their lessons. Pupils feel safe and secure. They know that the school listens and acts on their suggestions, for example, the 'Secret Garden' they helped to design, improvements made to play areas and their contributions in helping the new district hospital to plan what they will provide in the children's wards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good, everyone gets on very well together and pupils have a very good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit, healthy and out of harm's way. This results from very effective provision and is acknowledged in the school's achievement of external awards. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. Examples include looking after the garden and outside areas and being members of the 'KETCHUP' and 'PEPPA' teams that promote healthy eating and ensure that play times run smoothly. They also work hard to improve the local community, for example, successfully requesting street cleaning from the local council, participating in the 'Community Champions' schemes and singing and performing in the local area. They have a good understanding of and respect for the different cultural groups in school and celebrate their religious festivals. Pupils' understanding of the wider world and of their responsibilities within it is seen in their support and promotion of fair trade through their weekly fair trade stall and fund-raising for a children's centre in Kampala. Attendance is satisfactory and the school is working with determination to improve it further. Secure basic skills and good overall personal development ensure that pupils are well placed to face the future.

Overall, pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress from starting points that are below those typical for their age when they enter Nursery to attain average standards overall by the end of Year 6. Pupils' progress accelerates as they move through the school. This reflects consistently effective teaching and the success of the school's efforts to improve the English skills of many pupils, which leads to increasingly effective learning in all subjects as pupils get older. Although Year 2 pupils in 2008 made good progress given their starting points they were still a little below average. This was because their writing skills lagged behind their reading skills. Current work in Year 2 shows that progress is improving in this key skill. By Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are in line with the national averages and standards in science exceed them. The very good support provided for pupils learning English as an additional language and to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress and to attain standards higher than similar groups nationally.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make clear to pupils what they will be learning and everyone works purposefully to achieve what has been planned. Good relationships in all classes underpin the calm and effective management of pupils' behaviour and ensure little time is wasted. Skilful teaching assistants are used well to ensure that those pupils who need extra help succeed in lessons. Tasks are mostly well matched to pupils' different needs. Teachers make helpful comments on pupils' work, although the clarity and consistency in guidance as

to how to improve is not as effective as it might be. Also, teachers do not always check that pupils respond to this guidance.

The school has begun making links stronger between subjects to further improve the effectiveness of its good curriculum. There is a good range of opportunities for learning and these promote pupils' personal development very successfully. They include many visits to the local area and further afield and working alongside children from schools with very different characteristics. Pupils also enjoy themed weeks and the access to alternative curricular activities such as dry stone walling, growing plants in a garden centre, and a programme of holiday time activities for pupils and their families. Overall, care guidance and support for pupils is good rather than outstanding as the school judges. Strengths are in the school's robust procedures for safeguarding children that meet requirements. There are excellent systems to look after pupils' pastoral needs, for example, through the work of the bilingual support assistant and learning mentors. The school has effective partnerships with parents, support services and the local secondary school and Children's Centre. Support and guidance for pupils learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are good. However, guidance to help pupils know the next step in their learning is limited. For example, little use is made of targets to set goals for improvement. Although pupils in Year 6 are provided with targets to improve their writing they do not have a good understanding or knowledge of them.

Leadership and management are good. Leaders provide a clear direction for the school that is shared by all staff. Governors have a good understanding of the school through their programme of visits. They have the confidence and ability to hold the school to account should this be necessary. The school is effective in monitoring and evaluating its performance and has used information from this well to iron out inconsistencies in teaching found during the last inspection. The school works very successfully to promote inclusion and good community cohesion. Examples include the provision of bilingual support for the homework club, which is open to parents as well as pupils, parenting classes, the family holiday time provision and the development of a community garden where, for example, parents can grow herbs. As a result, the school successfully ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity and do not suffer from discrimination. The school has used its budget very well to remodel teaching areas and improve the school's facilities. The school has a good capacity to improve further.

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

### **Grade: 2**

From starting points typically below those typical for their age children achieve well. This is because provision in the EYFS has improved since the last inspection and is well led. It has established a marked incremental increase in children's attainment. For example, by the end of the Reception year children's attainment has risen from broadly typical for their age in 2006 to exceed the goals expected nationally in 2008. Good account is taken of information from parents when staff assess children's skills and knowledge: assessment underpins children's learning well. Staff are working hard to improve the satisfactory provision outside so that it to matches the good provision inside where children are able to choose from a broad range of interesting activities. Activities are matched to children's needs and are sensitively supported by adults. Basic skills, such as understanding letter sounds, are skilfully taught and this prepares children well for reading and writing. Adults have the skills to meet the needs of the children who speak English as an additional language and make effective use of the additional help from a bilingual assistant as required. An effective 'key worker' system is established which

ensures clear communication with parents. This is enhanced through coffee mornings and more formal meetings with parents. The care, guidance and support of the children are good.

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

- Improve the marking of work so that pupils receive clear and consistent guidance on how they can improve and ensure that pupils respond to this guidance.
- Extend and improve the use of targets so that pupils have rigorous academic goals to achieve

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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?	2
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	3
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

<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>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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

<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	2
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 very much for making the inspectors so welcome when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking to you about what makes your school so good. You told us about all the exciting things you do, for example, your visits and clubs, your interesting lessons and about how helpful all the adults are in school. We agree that staff give you interesting experiences, that they are very caring and that your lessons are well taught. This helps to make sure that overall you make good progress and achieve well. The support that is given to those of you who speak English as an additional language and those of you who find learning more difficult is good and your achievement is also good. Improvements to the Early Years' Unit enables children there to make good progress.

We were impressed with your good behaviour, with how well you all get on together and particularly with the efforts you make to improve the school and the local area, such as the 'Secret Garden' and by helping the hospital to plan what they will provide in the children's wards. You also have a good understanding of what you need to do keep fit, healthy and out of harm's way.

A major reason why your school is so good is because you have good leaders, good teaching and support staff and a very capable governing body. They all make this the best school they can. It is no surprise to us that your parents are delighted that you come to this school.

To make the school even better and to enable you to build on your already good achievement we have asked the school to do two things.

- Improve the marking of your work so that you receive clear and consistent guidance that will help you improve it.
- Extend and improve the use of targets that will give you a good understanding of what you need to do to take the next steps in your learning.

You can of course help by acting on the suggestions that the teachers make.