

Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 104821 |
| Local Authority | St. Helens |
| Inspection number | 336372 |
| Inspection dates | 22–23 March 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Sue Sharkey |

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

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|--|---|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 204 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs M Murphy |
| Headteacher | Mr Ian Rimmer |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 March 2007 |
| School address | Govett Road Nutgrove St Helens WA9 5NH |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited ten lessons, eight teachers were seen and meetings were held with governors, staff and groups of pupils; they also had a discussion with the local authority School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work. They looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' progress and at pupils' books, safeguarding documents, key policies and assessments. Inspection questionnaires were received and analysed from 77 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether teaching is challenging enough in Key Stage 2 English and Key Stage 1 writing for the most able pupils, to enable them to achieve higher levels
- how monitoring by all leaders at all levels impacts on pupils' achievement
- whether strategies to raise attainment in Key Stage 1 have been effective
- how the school's leadership develops pupils' awareness and understanding of varying cultures in Britain.

Information about the school

This is an average size school. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average and the vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has the International Schools and Healthy Schools Awards.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Nutgrove Methodist is a good school and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. It provides a purposeful environment which contributes well to the pupils' enjoyment of school and their good personal development. Good links with the community and a range of external partners help to meet pupils' needs and bring benefits to their learning and personal development. The skills and confidence that pupils develop ensure that they are well prepared for later life.

The school's evaluation of its own performance is accurate and actions taken to improve achievement have had a positive impact, showing that the school has good capacity to improve.

Throughout the whole school good teaching and the good curriculum ensure that pupils progress well. This includes those for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Rising standards have meant that many pupils now leave school in Year 6 with above average standards in mathematics. The school has a number of strategies in place to improve achievement in English but as yet there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills across the curriculum so that pupils' writing is as good as their reading. Teachers use a good range of teaching styles to reach out to the different needs of pupils. However, there is not always enough challenge in writing to stretch the most-able pupils. Lessons are well planned to make them interesting with good quality resources and chances to use information and communication technology (ICT), but there is not always a wide range of technology available to support pupils' own independent learning.

Pupils make a good contribution to their school community. They take on roles and responsibilities and have many occasions to express their views. For example, as members of the school council they are able to contribute to school decisions. They talk confidently about writing to the local council to ask them to reduce the traffic outside school and they were instigators in the acquisition of the new school gates to help keep everyone in school safe. Pupils are excited when they talk about all the things they enjoy in school as well as in the local and wider community. Local and wider links are good but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to explore the richness and diversity of British culture. Parents appreciate the school's provision of a well-run breakfast club, toddler group and family learning facilities.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve achievement by:

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

- ensuring there is a consistent approach to challenging the most-able pupils in writing
 - improving the breadth and range of writing across the curriculum so that standards are as high as they are in reading
 - ensuring that a wider range of technological resources are used across the curriculum to maximise independent learning.
- Improve pupils' understanding of the richness and diversity of the British culture.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress from their starting points, which are usually below those typical for five-year-olds, particularly in communication, language and literature. As a result, by the time they leave Year 6 standards are broadly in line with the national average. The school has had a range of strategies in place to raise pupils' achievement. These are proving to be successful and, since a dip in 2007, standards have been steadily rising. Recent assessment of pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 also indicates that standards at this stage are set to rise. Throughout the school, pupils are enthusiastic learners. They enjoy lessons, behave well, are motivated and engaged. Pupils were excited during a mathematics lesson when they had to mix ingredients for a magic medicine whilst they converted the quantities from fractions to decimals. They worked well together, sharing suggestions and listening to each others' contributions. The activity ensured that all joined in and that all made good progress in using mathematical vocabulary whilst solving a problem.

Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong; in lessons and when playing together they treat each other extremely well and look out for one another. Pupils enjoy and are captivated when they experience and learn something new about life. Very high-quality assemblies, productions and community activities help pupils develop a very good understanding of different cultures. They have positive attitudes and their enjoyment of learning is a key factor in their above-average attendance. Pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle is good. From an early age pupils know how to eat healthily and engage enthusiastically in games and sports activities. Pupils enjoy learning about the environment and many are members of the Eco Club or the gardening group. They talk enthusiastically about growing their own vegetables and reporting their climate change plan to the town council. Pupils' involvement in the school and wider community is good. They take an active part in helping others, including regularly raising funds to support local and international charities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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|---|----------|
| Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹ | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 2 |
| The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |
| Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹ | 2 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 1 |

How effective is the provision?

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school because the quality of teaching and learning is good. Prominent strengths of teaching include the good relationships in all classes and the high number of teaching assistants who make a positive contribution to the learning of pupils and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Teaching is enhanced by welcoming, well-resourced classrooms, which are supportive to learning. Lessons contain a good range of activities to enthuse pupils. However, work is not always challenging enough to extend learning in writing for the more able pupils. Good assessment systems are used in the classroom, helping teachers to modify their planning. Pupils work well together, particularly in pairs, and teachers use this approach well to aid discussion and stimulate learning. Pupils talk positively about their learning; they know how to achieve the targets set for them as well as their next steps for learning. Marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection, enabling pupils to understand what they have learnt and what they have to do to improve their work.

The good curriculum is well matched to the wide variety of pupils' needs and is used well by teachers to underpin their learning. Reading is used well to research information but as yet there are not enough opportunities for pupils to carry out extended writing across the curriculum. There is a wide range of enrichment activities both at lunch time and after school offering pupils the chance to add to their skills and interests. The range of visitors, partnerships and extended opportunities available to pupils greatly enhance their learning as well as their personal development. For example, pupils thoroughly enjoy improving their rugby skills at lunch time through the guidance and support from

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the local professional rugby league club. ICT skills are well taught, but as yet pupils do not have enough opportunities to use a wide range of resources in order to extend their independent learning. The teaching of French throughout the school has been given added relevance through the links that the school has in France.

Pupils feel happy and secure in school because they are cared for well and supported by staff. Pupils' good progress through school is aided by the good standards of care, guidance and support. Staff work well with outside agencies to provide help for pupils' social and emotional needs and to ensure that vulnerable pupils receive support tailored to their individual needs. Arrangements when children commence school are good and Year 6 pupils say that teachers are helping them well to prepare for secondary school. The school has a number of strategies in place that are extremely successful in raising attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

| | |
|--|----------|
| The quality of teaching | 2 |
| Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning | 2 |
| The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships | 2 |
| The effectiveness of care, guidance and support | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Good leadership and management ensures that the school checks on its performance accurately, identifying strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher and senior leaders are dedicated to continuous improvement, teaching is rigorously monitored and this has a good impact on pupils' achievement. Rapid action was put in place to address the Key Stage 2 dip in standards in 2007 so that the Year 6 end-of-year tests for 2008 and 2009 showed continuous rise towards the national average in English and above for mathematics. Equal opportunities are promoted well, for example by rigorously evaluating and monitoring the performance of all pupils. Governors provide real guidance; they support and challenge with enthusiasm and commitment. Governors understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well and have a good involvement in shaping its future direction. Policies and procedures for safeguarding are satisfactory. The school meets all requirements and policies are in line with government regulations. The school's involvement in the local community, and its success in extending pupils' awareness of other beliefs and ways of life, shows good community cohesion. Global awareness is good and has been built upon by the International School Award, whereas the pupils' understanding of cultures within our British society is too narrow.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 2 |
| Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 2 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children a good start in their personal, social and emotional development. Good links with parents and carers help children settle into school life; this provides a boost to successful learning. Children's love of learning begins in the Reception class where they are well nurtured and cared for in a safe environment. Children's progress is checked regularly and adults use the information to modify what they do to meet the needs of individuals. This helps all groups of children to learn well and make good progress towards the goals expected for their age. By the time they reach Year 1 many have reached these levels. Leadership and management are good, ensuring that planning reflects an understanding of how young children learn. This provides them with a wide range of stimulating learning opportunities and a good balance between adult-led and child-initiated play. Planning takes account of detailed assessment so that children's individual needs are met. Challenge, however, to extend children's thinking, is sometimes missed. The use of both inside and outside areas means that children widen their learning experience and they grow in their desire to explore and be independent. Children learn and demonstrate good behaviour and relationships with each other as a result of the good quality care and support they receive.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

Most parents/carers are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children and most feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are pleased with their children's progress. Some parents/carers took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views, and inspectors agreed with them. There was also a very small minority of parents/carers who raised concerns and these were looked into by the inspection team. A few were concerned about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that behaviour in school is good; the school does have a system in place that includes working with both pupils and parent/carers and has a range of sanctions for the very small number of pupils who do not always behave well. A few parents/carers feel that communication between school and home could be improved. The school has a system for this but will look into improving its arrangements in the future. The school hopes that parents/carers will always take the opportunity to complete the questionnaires so that the school can listen to their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 46 | 60 | 27 | 35 | 3 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 51 | 66 | 24 | 31 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 30 | 39 | 37 | 48 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 36 | 47 | 36 | 47 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 44 | 57 | 28 | 36 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 33 | 43 | 36 | 47 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 37 | 48 | 35 | 45 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 24 | 31 | 41 | 53 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 33 | 43 | 35 | 45 | 6 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 25 | 32 | 34 | 44 | 11 | 14 | 3 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 19 | 25 | 49 | 64 | 6 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 32 | 42 | 37 | 48 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 44 | 57 | 29 | 38 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 |

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

| Grade | Judgement | Description |
|---------|--------------|--|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs. |
| Grade 2 | Good | These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory | These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. |

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 39 | 58 | 3 | 0 |
| Primary schools | 13 | 50 | 33 | 4 |
| Secondary schools | 17 | 40 | 34 | 9 |
| Sixth forms | 18 | 43 | 37 | 2 |
| Special schools | 26 | 54 | 18 | 2 |
| Pupil referral units | 7 | 55 | 30 | 7 |
| All schools | 15 | 49 | 32 | 5 |

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Achievement: | the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training. |
| Attainment: | the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. |
| Capacity to improve: | the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement. |
| Leadership and management: | the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school. |
| Learning: | how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners. |
| Overall effectiveness: | <p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support. |
| Progress: | the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started. |

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nutgrove Methodist Aided Primary School, St Helens,
WA9 5NH

I'm writing to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to all of you and have good memories of how friendly you were. Most of you behave well. Your good understanding of how to keep healthy and take lots of exercise also impressed us. It looked like many of you enjoy your healthy snack at break time as well as lunch time. It was good to see that you raise funds for charity and help your community; it must have been hard work clearing snowy paths.

I enjoyed watching how effectively you learn in your classrooms and outside as well. The school provides a wide range for activities for you, which I'm pleased to see you find exciting. Teachers work very hard to help you learn and I think that teaching and the curriculum that teachers plan in your school is good. I also thought your work was good and that you achieve well. Adults know you well and you feel confident that they will help you if you have any worries

I have asked your school to see if they can make sure that you use a wider range of different computers or resources, such as digital cameras or microscopes which attach to computers, much more so that you can explore and investigate on your own. When you are in lessons I have also asked the school to challenge you more so that some of you can achieve higher levels and to include writing much more in subjects other than English.

I love your Chinese dragon hanging up but I have asked the school to let you explore more about all the different groups of people who live in Britain. I hope you enjoy this. I was really pleased to tell your headteacher that your school is a good school. Well done and I hope you all continue to work hard and continue to enjoy school.

Best wishes

Mrs Sue Sharkey

Lead Inspector

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