

St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Hawkshaw

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105340
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	336478
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Marie Cordey

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 of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Mrs G Woodward
Date of previous school inspection	20 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, internal and external monitoring of the school, and 54 parental questionnaires, 60 pupil questionnaires and 9 staff questionnaires.

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

- the extent to which all pupils make progress and enjoy their learning, particularly higher attaining pupils, boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and progress in the subject of writing
- the quality of teaching and assessment to support learning
- whether small numbers of pupils were factors in apparently fluctuating attainment and progress
- outdoor provision and how well children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make progress
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than average. There are a very small number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There are low numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Fourteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in the Reception class. The school has gained many awards including the Activemark for its sport provision, Healthy School status, Silver Eco Schools award and Eco Rangers. The school was the first school in Bury to achieve the full International Schools Award.

There is a before-school and after-school club located at the school which is not managed by the governing body and did not form part of this inspection. A separate inspection report for this provision is available on the Ofsted website.

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

This is a good school with outstanding features. Many pupils say, 'I think this is the best school in the world. I love it.' Pupils' welfare is at the heart of the school's character. Every pupil is nurtured and valued and each becomes more confident and caring of others as a result. Excellent attendance reflects their enjoyment of school. Pupils' behaviour is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Equality of opportunity for all and the elimination of discrimination are non-negotiable aspects of the school's character. Pupils respect and celebrate people from different backgrounds, both in their community and internationally. The school is twinned with a school in Angouleme, France and this, coupled with excellent provision for modern foreign languages, forges very strong global links.

The local community is central to the school's activities; excellent partnerships with local authority partners, the parish, neighbouring schools and community action groups, lead to an exceptionally strong focus on pupils' personal and academic development. The well equipped community garden and recreation ground, numerous church activities and generous fund-raising are just a few examples of the very strong community involvement. Parents' positive attitudes towards school are reflected in comments such as: 'All the teachers provide a safe, secure environment for our child to learn and grow.'

The quality of teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. This ensures that pupils achieve well and make good progress to reach standards that are, on the whole, above national averages when they leave school. Pupils do not do as well in writing, especially in Key Stage 2, and the school has accurately identified this as an area for improvement. Pupils enjoy learning, especially when they are involved and excited by their lessons. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 relished writing poems after joyfully recounting their personal experiences and views relating to colours. Carefully planned work matches pupils' needs well and successfully challenges their writing skills. Consequently, one wrote, 'When black pops into my mind it makes me smell fear in the air.' The careful and sensitive planning and support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they make good progress. In some lessons progress is slower because pupils do not have enough opportunity to explore ideas and discuss their learning with each other. Marking does not always include clear enough targets for improvement, especially in writing, so some pupils are unsure of exactly how well they are doing or what to do to improve. Nevertheless, effective tracking of pupils' performance means that work is generally adapted to meet pupils' requirements and pupils meet their increasingly challenging targets.

The new creative, skills based curriculum is providing more relevant and exciting lessons. It supports pupils' learning well and the excellent enrichments to the curriculum

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are welcomed by pupils and parents. A host of after school activities include the busy choir and sporting events. The girls' football team has won a trophy while representing Bury at a Greater Manchester tournament. Information and communication technology is now better resourced and is beginning to enliven teaching as well as developing pupils' independent learning and research skills.

Good leadership and management involve all staff in driving the school's commitment to the personal and academic care for every pupil. The school has a good understanding of its strengths as well as what it needs to do to improve further. Some improvements to the outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage have already taken place. The school recognises the need to improve it further to accelerate children's progress in their physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Governors are very involved in school life and have no hesitation in questioning the school's performance. The school has acted effectively on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, particularly in raising standards in some subjects. These developments demonstrate the school's good capacity to sustain further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and achievement in writing, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - improving the effectiveness of assessment systems so that all pupils are aware of how well they are doing and how they can improve their learning
 - developing the creative and skills based curriculum so lessons match pupils' interests and abilities more consistently and increase opportunities for pupils to explore ideas and discuss their learning.
- Improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its use by:
 - ensuring the children have more opportunities to play and learn outdoors
 - providing planned opportunities for the children to develop their physical skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

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

Over the past three years, standards in reading, writing and mathematics have varied from average to above average overall at the end of Year 2. This is linked to low numbers, differences in the starting points of pupils and a variation in the numbers of boys and girls. Pupils' attainment is currently above average and improving further, especially in writing. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1, building on the good progress they make in their personal, social and emotional development during the Early Years Foundation Stage. This progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 where standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science. Writing standards are below average but the careful planning of lessons provides a sharper focus on improving pupils' writing skills. Some boys and higher attaining pupils had not achieved as well as they should in 2008. This was quickly identified and effectively acted upon by the

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school. Consequently, these pupils are now making progress similar to other pupils. Pupils achieve well and enjoy learning, particularly in lessons where they are active and involved. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils thrived in their individual and group singing of Second World War songs. They rehearsed, discussed and refined their performance until they produced a word perfect rendition. Pupils benefit from the good relationships they have with each other and their teachers.

Pupils behave well in lessons overall and their behaviour around school is exemplary. They feel safe and are aware of potential dangers, for instance on the local main road. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles that goes beyond diet and fitness. The outstanding personal, social, health and emotional well-being programme ensures that pupils are confident, knowledgeable and understanding young people. They revel in opportunities to take on responsibility and take great pride, for instance, in their roles as playground organisers. They make excellent contributions to the school and wider community. Very good preparation for secondary education, above average standards and their good social skills contribute well to preparing them for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Pupils' good progress emerges from the well-taught lessons that offer a range of activities and a carefully planned mix of whole class, small group and independent work. This engages the pupils' interests. One-to-one sessions with skilful teaching assistants support well pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and help them to learn effectively. Occasionally, teaching assistants are under-used, especially when the teacher is introducing the lesson. Teachers are given up-to-date information about the attainment and progress of the pupils in their class to help planning.

The curriculum is carefully planned to both interest pupils and improve standards. It has been particularly effective in improving writing in Key Stage 1. Provision for information and communication technology is improving and new computers and software are leading to better teaching through effective use of interactive whiteboards. The provision for art and music is strong. Pupils benefit by working with artists and musicians and are proud to show off their accomplishments.

Safeguarding procedures are rigorous and pupils cared for well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of carefully planned support, although some become distracted when they are not stimulated by their work. The school works effectively with outside agencies, such as speech and language therapists, to meet individual needs.

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?

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors share a drive for raising aspirations and improving standards. This drive is shared by staff as well as pupils who say: 'Our school helps us to do good work and be whatever we want to be.' The care and welfare of pupils receive high priority and safeguarding procedures meet current requirements. The governing body is increasingly more challenging and focused on school improvement. The school is extremely active in the local network of schools and works very closely with other institutions to improve its work further. Community cohesion is outstanding. The school monitors this area of its work very well which provides the pupils with a strong understanding of being a part of a multicultural Britain. School self-evaluation is searching and mostly accurate. It has led to more effective monitoring of the school's performance and improved standards. Parents and carers are

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listened to and concerns acted upon swiftly. They are very involved in school life and the parent and teachers' association hosts numerous activities to raise money for the school. The school is respected and praised by the local community who shared in the planning and the subsequent upkeep and care of the community garden.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall provision is satisfactory but good leadership and management are securing improvements. Children make satisfactory progress in the areas of communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. They make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. A satisfactory range of well-prepared indoor activities encourages children to explore and enjoy their learning. They quickly become skilful in using computers, linking sounds and letters and playing and learning using sand and water. Limitations in the outside space and fewer resources there mean that children are not always fully engaged and work is not precisely matched to their needs. Whilst this provision is overall satisfactory, opportunities for children to explore and develop physically and improve their knowledge and understanding of the world are limited. Nevertheless, good leadership and management are resulting in some landscaping improvements as well as the securing of further funds to improve outdoor provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is keenly aware of what is required to improve children's learning from satisfactory to good and is single minded in her actions to secure that improvement. Children are well cared for and requirements for welfare, health and safety are fully met.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of those who responded were happy with the school's provision and indicated that their children enjoyed school. All parents and carers agreed that the school helped their children to have a healthy lifestyle and that the school met their children's individual needs. There were a very small number of concerns about behaviour, teaching and pupils' preparation for the future but inspectors found no evidence to support these.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Hawkshaw 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 inspector received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	86	80	18	17	4	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	72	28	26	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	70	65	38	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	78	72	28	26	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	84	78	20	19	0	0	4	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	82	76	26	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	84	78	24	22	0	0	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)	74	70	26	25	0	0	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	73	24	22	2	2	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	67	30	28	0	0	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	62	58	38	36	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	70	65	34	31	2	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	88	83	14	13	2	2	0	0

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.



It was a delight to visit your school. The inspection team thoroughly enjoyed talking to you all and listened carefully to what you had to say. You told us how happy you are at school and your attendance is excellent. Well done! Yours is a good school and some parts of it are outstanding. Like you, we were impressed by how many interesting things there are to do. You enjoy sports and music and are proud to hold the International School Award.

You could not wait to tell us about your community garden, all the global work you do and the many ways you help and care for each other. I would also like to add that you also care for visitors and looked after us very well. Younger children settle down well in the Reception class and you make sure that older pupils look after the younger ones. I think that you make a very important contribution to your school.

You are keen to learn and this helps you to produce good work in most subjects and to achieve well. Your writing in Key Stage 2 is not as good as your other work and your teachers are working with you to improve it. You enjoy lessons most when you are given the chance to develop your own ideas and talk to each other about your learning. We have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to do this. Some of you are not sure what you can do to make your work even better and so we have also asked your teachers to let you know about the different ways you can improve it. We would also like the outside area to be made more interesting and exciting for children in the Reception class.

Your headteacher and all the staff are working very hard to make your school even better. I wish you every success for your future.

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