

# Armitage CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105502
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	336504
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Price Grimshaw

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	187
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Peter Clark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gaynor Stubbs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Rostron Avenue Ardwick Manchester M12 5NP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited each class in the school and observed eight lessons. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and personnel from external agencies working in partnership with the school. They observed the school's work and looked at pupils' work, improvement planning, a range of policy documents, national published assessment data and the school's own data. Inspectors also analysed 33 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as a number of questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

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

- the extent of the school's improvement since the last inspection and how this reflects its capacity for sustained improvement
- how effectively the school has responded to changes in the population of pupils over recent years, particularly in providing for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language
- the impact of the work of support staff, including those from external agencies, on outcomes for pupils.

## Information about the school

This smaller than average school serves a mixed area in social and economic terms, including some pockets of significant disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is three times the national average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and approximately half of all pupils speak English as an additional language. There is provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes. At the time of the inspection the headteacher, who had previously worked in the role of deputy headteacher, had been in post for just over four weeks.

**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 that cares for its pupils exceptionally well. The school uses a very wide range of strategies to ensure that the pastoral and emotional needs of each individual pupil are fully met. Through excellent partnerships with external agencies the school carries out some innovative work that successfully builds pupils' self-esteem and confidence, enabling all pupils to make at least good progress in their academic work. Facilities such as the 'calm space', that provides a holistic approach to therapy for pupils, their families, and school staff, contribute very effectively to the peaceful and welcoming atmosphere that is evident in the school. Pupils are extremely appreciative of the care shown to them by staff and say that they feel safe and secure at all times. Comments such as, 'My school is a place where children can open up and tell the teacher if we have problems,' and, 'I am proud of my school and I feel safe,' are typical of many received during the inspection. The outstanding quality of care, guidance and support is a key factor in pupils' good achievement. From below average starting points they reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. A significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make outstanding progress. Those who speak English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress. Nevertheless, the rate of progress is uneven across the school, being much more rapid at Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1.

Teaching is of good quality. Pupils rightly say that the majority of teachers 'work hard to make learning fun'. The curriculum is carefully planned to motivate and enthuse pupils, with many opportunities for them to develop their skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). The school has recently modified the curriculum at Key Stage 1, by introducing elements of content and delivery from the Early Years Foundation Stage, with the aim of accelerating progress. However, this approach is not yet established and it is too early to see any discernable impact in terms of pupils' achievement by the end of Year 2. Systems for tracking pupils' progress are of high quality and regular meetings between staff mean that any underachievement is quickly identified so that support for individuals can speedily be put in place. Systems for the use of data in the Early Years Foundation Stage are less well developed.

Good succession planning has meant that the headteacher's transition from her previous role as deputy headteacher has been seamless. Consequently, she and other senior leaders have been able to establish quickly a clear vision for the school's future that is shared by all staff. School managers and governors have an accurate and detailed understanding of the school's main strengths and areas for development, which is reflected in good-quality improvement planning. This, combined with the school's success in improving outcomes for pupils and provision since the previous inspection,

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means that there is good capacity for further improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress in Key Stage 1 by ensuring that recent modifications to the curriculum are consistently and effectively implemented.
- Improve systems for the use of data in the Early Years Foundation Stage to help ensure that children make the best possible progress and that any underachievement is quickly identified.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Since the last inspection pupils' achievement has improved and is now good. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Pupils attain particularly well in science to reach standards that are above average. The school's most recent data, together with evidence gained from lesson observations, show that this upward trend is set to continue and a significant proportion of pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to attain above average standards in English and mathematics as well as science. This was clear, for example, in a mathematics lesson where pupils' enthusiastic involvement in a practical activity resulted in them making good progress, and many produced impressive work. There is very little difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils and by the end of Year 6 all have made at least good progress from their starting points. However, the rate of progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 is more rapid than that made during Key Stage 1. This has been recognised by school managers who have taken steps to address the issue, for instance, through modifications to the Key Stage 1 curriculum, but it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

All aspects of pupils' personal development are enhanced by the high quality of care provided by the school. Pupils with emotional difficulties and those who exhibit challenging behaviour are supported in such a way that they feel safe in school, and overall behaviour across the school is good. They enjoy their learning and respond very well to adults. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, with one expressing the views of many in the comment, 'Breakfast is the most important meal of the day – and if you don't have it at home, you can come into school for your breakfast!' Pupils support each other, as shown in one lesson where a boy was spontaneously applauded by his classmates after being awarded a merit for good work. Pupils are trained to carry out peer massage, which helps them to adopt a positive frame of mind for learning. Very good teamwork is a strong feature of many lessons. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities, such as mentoring their peers. Attendance is broadly average and has improved since the last inspection owing to the school's effective strategies. Pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds get on very well together and their awareness of different faiths and cultures is good.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and although it is good overall, there are a few examples of outstanding practice. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, and very effective behaviour management is a strong feature of most lessons. The majority of lessons move at a brisk pace and, as a result, pupils stay engaged with the variety of interesting tasks set for them. In a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson the constant praise and encouragement offered by the teacher, combined with a number of carefully planned activities that challenged each pupil, resulted in the whole class of highly motivated pupils making excellent progress. In the small minority of lessons where teaching is less effective, planned outcomes are not precise enough and tasks are not always well matched to individual pupils' abilities. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and give good-quality feedback. Pupils are aware of their targets and know what they need to do to improve. The progress of individuals is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed.

The curriculum at Key Stage 2 has been designed to meet the needs of all pupils and capture their interest through an effective theme-based approach. There is a suitable emphasis on practical work which pupils clearly enjoy, as reflected in comments such as, 'Science is great fun because we get to do loads of experiments!' School leaders consider the views of pupils in planning the curriculum; for example, when pupils reported in a survey that they would like more opportunities to use ICT the curriculum

<sup>1</sup> 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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was modified to accommodate this. Pupils speak with tremendous enthusiasm about 'super learning days' where, 'You learn such a lot and none of it is boring!' The school reviewed the Key Stage 1 curriculum and staff have made changes with the aim of accelerating pupils' progress but this new approach is not yet fully established.

Support staff, including those employed by external agencies working in partnership with the school, make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The input of staff such as the family worker and therapists is a significant strength of the school's work and enables all pupils, including the most vulnerable, to be fully involved in school life and make at least good progress. Teachers' expertise in identifying and referring pupils for additional support is an important part of this excellent work. Pupils love the safe and comforting environment and are keen to tell visitors all about it; one said, 'We have a calm space where you can relax and think about your mistakes.' Pupils genuinely value the care shown to them by staff and this outstanding aspect of the school's work demonstrates how well the school has responded to the individual needs of pupils in its changing population.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher and senior staff have worked effectively to create a coherent team approach in which all staff are strongly committed to meeting the needs of each individual pupil. Good-quality improvement planning is presented in such a way that the school's aims are easily understood by all. Senior leaders made a good start to developing the roles of middle managers and these staff are responding positively to taking on increased responsibility. Teaching and learning are managed well through the established systems for monitoring classroom practice and scrutinising pupils' work. Governors are involved in evaluating the school's work and, consequently, are highly aware of its main strengths and weaknesses. They have a thorough understanding of data and provide challenge and support to school leaders. Staff and governors take seriously their responsibility to safeguard all pupils and the school achieves this well. Statutory requirements are met and staff ensure that agreed systems, such as those for risk assessment, are rigorously adhered to.

The impact of the school's effective promotion of equal opportunities can be seen in the improved outcomes for all groups of pupils over recent years. Gaps in performance between different groups, including various minority ethnic groups, have narrowed and

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the school encourages all pupils to be ambitious. The school evaluates all aspects of its work to ensure that community cohesion is promoted well and recent developments, such as the establishment of international links, have further enhanced this work.

The school enjoys good relationships with parents and carers and takes care to ensure effective communication between home and school. The importance of working with families to promote pupils' well-being is clearly recognised by all staff and the school is beginning to develop some interesting outreach work in the local community. The school's work with external agencies is exemplary. Visiting staff make an excellent contribution to pupils' personal and academic development, and work with other schools in the area, supported by key workers, has a very positive impact on outcomes for the pupils involved.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Most children enter the Nursery with skills that are below typical age-related expectations, particularly in terms of their personal and social development. Overall, they make good progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage to reach standards that are often broadly average by the time they enter Year 1. Children settle quickly in the Nursery and soon learn to play together, sharing and supporting each other. Support for children who speak English as an additional language is of good quality, so their English language skills develop quickly.

The successful teamwork of staff is a strength; staff work well together, effectively managed by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader. The learning environment, both



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indoors and outdoors, is attractive and welcoming. Staff assess children's individual learning styles and are aware of these when planning activities. Most of the time staff observe children's learning carefully and intervene when necessary to support their progress further but on a minority of occasions intervention by staff is not timely enough to ensure that children make the best possible progress. Staff carry out regular observations of children's learning but the use of assessment data is no better than satisfactory in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result, systems for tracking children's progress and rapidly identifying any possible underachievement are not as effective as those elsewhere in the school.

Good working relationships with parents and carers are developing well. Staff are working to increase parents' and carers' involvement with their children's learning, for example by encouraging parents and carers to participate in keeping their children's learning journals. Arrangements for ensuring children's welfare are good. The high profile given to pastoral care throughout the rest of the school is also evident here.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Approximately one fifth of parents and carers returned the questionnaires distributed prior to the inspection, which represents a relatively low rate of response. Almost all of these were entirely positive in line with inspectors' view of the school. Very few questionnaires included comments and those that did praised the school for its work.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Armitage C of E 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 inspector received 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	79	14	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	79	14	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	70	20	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	74	16	25	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	44	67	22	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	71	18	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	67	22	33	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)	40	63	18	29	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	61	20	32	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	60	22	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	57	22	35	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	64	20	30	4	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	67	22	33	0	0	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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



Inspection of Armitage C of E Primary School, Manchester, M12 5NP

As you know, I visited your school recently with two other inspectors so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a good school. You told us that the staff in the school care for you very well, and we agree with you. The quality of the care and support provided by the staff in your school is outstanding. We know that you really appreciate everything they do for you. You seem very proud of your 'calm space' and we can see why! What a lovely place it is; we know that it helps you to stay relaxed and calm so that you can learn well and make good progress. I thought the peer massage was excellent. It was great to see you supporting each other in this way, and I know that you care for each other through other activities, such as mentoring. This is very valuable work, so keep it up!

We are pleased to say that your school has improved in lots of ways over the three years since it was last inspected. You now make faster progress and reach higher standards, especially in science. Your new headteacher and all the staff are pleased about this but they would like the school to be even better, so we have made some suggestions to them. We know that staff have been working to help the pupils in Key Stage 1 make faster progress, and we think that they can do this by looking even more carefully at the activities for these pupils. We noticed that most of the staff have very good systems for tracking how well you are doing, so we have recommended that the learning of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is tracked in a similar way.

We really enjoyed talking to you and reading your completed questionnaires. One of the things we were very pleased about was that so many of you said that you are proud to be pupils at Armitage. We wish you well in the future.

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