

# Atherton St George's CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130300
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wigan
<b>Inspection number</b>	341018
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Michael Onyon

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	168
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Rev Dr Buckley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rachael Coultard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 April 2007
<b>School address</b>	Derby Street Atherton Manchester M46 0HJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 883971
<b>Fax number</b>	01942 893907
<b>Email address</b>	enquiries@admin.saintgeorges.wigan.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	341018

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at, among other documentation, the school's data records, policies and minutes of governing body meetings, and the notes of the School Improvement Partner's visits. Questionnaires from 49 parents and carers were received and analysed.

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

- the consistency of teaching and quality of the curriculum, and their impact on attainment, particularly in writing
- the quality of provision and children's achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception)
- the school's perceived strengths in providing for pupils facing barriers to learning
- how well leaders at all levels demonstrate ambition and seek improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school situated close to the centre of Atherton. Most pupils are White British with a very small proportion from other ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average, as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class.

The school is in receipt of the Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold and Quality Mark 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

This is a good school. It has several outstanding features which give it a distinctive character and quality of provision. The school has a wonderful ethos, the result of the exceptional care, guidance and support provided for the pupils by the inspiring headteacher and her staff and the impact this has on the personal development of the pupils, particularly in their maturity and consideration for others. This is a school where every child really does matter. Those facing significant barriers to their learning are supported effectively through a good, well-planned curriculum.

Since the last inspection there have been improvements in achievement, attendance and behaviour. This track record of improvement illustrates very well the ambition and drive that the senior leadership team provide. Through rigorous self-evaluation the school is aware of its strengths and areas for development and plans carefully to address these issues. There is a strong commitment to develop staff through focused training and by involving them in working parties to address key areas around learning. This illustrates well the good capacity that the school has to improve further.

The ability and aptitude of pupils vary from one cohort to the next. Pupils achieve well, taking into account their starting points; the attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2008 was not as high as in past years. As a result of keenly focused support work, the 2009 outcomes are much improved and in line with the national average. Progress in writing has not been as strong as that in reading and mathematics. Strategies to improve writing have been successfully introduced but are yet to have the desired impact. The school's main aim is to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils, to develop in them life-long interests in learning and achievement, and it does this outstandingly well.

The quality of teaching is good. It is not yet of a consistently high enough quality to ensure that pupils' achievement is outstanding, but in parts, such as in the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, and in the care with which teachers assess the work of pupils and engage them in the process, it is very strong. Pupils' behaviour is good, as is their attitude to work. In the Reception class the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Here, the outcomes of assessment are not used effectively to challenge children's learning and there is a lack of balance between learning activities led by adults and those offering children opportunities to choose.

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

- The school should build on its existing strengths to:
- Raise attainment in writing across the school.

**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

- Improve the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - making better use of assessment to plan activities that challenge children's learning and enable them to build on their prior skills
  - providing an effective balance between adult-led learning activities and those independently chosen by children.

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

The pupils of St George's are a credit to the school and themselves. Their behaviour is good and, following considerable improvement, their attendance is now average. Pupils are very caring and show a deep, mature understanding of the needs and feelings of their peers and those outside the school, demonstrated by their contributions in assemblies and charitable fundraising for a wide range of organisations. They relish the opportunities for responsibility and take these up by assuming a number of important roles. These include acting as members of the school council, the eco committee, team captains and the way in which older pupils help younger ones play actively together through their work as 'playleaders'. Most impressive is the willingness of pupils, regardless of whether they hold these roles or not, to act upon the advice and decisions of their peers. The school council holds an important role in involving all pupils in the life of the school, encouraging their suggestions for improvements. Pupils demonstrate an outstanding awareness of what contributes to a healthy lifestyle. They thoroughly enjoy participating in the increased range of activities, including music, drama and sport. Through such activities, music in particular, they are well known in the community. All in all, the many outstanding attributes pupils demonstrate in their personal development shows they are well equipped to go on to the next stage of their education.

In lessons pupils behave well and show they are ready to learn. Indeed in the best lessons there is real enthusiasm and pupils display a good range of learning skills. They show that they can work together well, take initiative and respond well to challenges. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are more passive learners and complete tasks diligently but with little enthusiasm. Good contributing factors to the development of the whole child are the average standards attained, from low starting points, and the overall good progress in learning as seen in pupils' work. Since the previous inspection attainment has improved, being most noticeable in reading, mathematics and science. In 2009 one third of pupils who took the end of Year 6 test in mathematics attained the higher level. In English, attainment is broadly average because writing standards are not as high as they could be. Nonetheless, the school's determined actions are leading to improvements. The quality of learning and progress are good overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high-quality support from teaching assistants both in and out of the classroom. As a result, they make good progress not only in literacy and numeracy but also in the skills for learning and life.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

**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

<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>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</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>1</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The work has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development. Close monitoring of progress and well-being ensures that all pupils are supported to a very high standard. Pupils facing barriers to their learning are extremely well supported, for example through the excellent work of the learning mentor in helping pupils to overcome emotional issues. Academic mentoring provided to targeted pupils, whose progress may be slipping behind that of their peers, is also of very high quality. Relationships observed during the inspection were respectful and very positive. Daily 'peer massage' sessions help pupils settle calmly into a productive learning environment. Links with services to support vulnerable pupils are excellent. Transition arrangements between all key stages have improved and are effective, and pupils are provided with high-quality guidance and support to prepare them for the next stages in their education.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources to stimulate learning well. For example, in a literacy lesson in the Year 6 classroom, the teacher's role play enabled pupils to interview a leading character in their story. This effectively caught the attention of all pupils and helped them to make notes and to develop their own writing. In the best lessons, teachers encourage pupils to act as resources for each other, for example through talking in pairs to discuss each other's developing thinking. Teachers provide pupils with clear

<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.

**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

feedback so they are motivated to work effectively. Where practice is at its best, pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own and others' work and to offer suggestions about possible improvements.

The curriculum is good and focuses well on the development of basic skills, particularly numeracy, and information and communication technology. Displays around school exemplify good links between subjects. Different faiths and cultures are represented in areas of the school. The effective teaching of French provides pupils with enjoyable opportunities to learn a modern foreign language. Music and drama are promoted well through visiting performers, with the fruits of that work evident in pupils' performances and the evocative singing of pupils heard by inspectors in an assembly. The curriculum is monitored well at different levels throughout the school with areas for development clearly recognised through ongoing curriculum reviews. Pupils' personal development is promoted through the effective teaching of social and emotional aspects of learning, and through the very positive ethos of the school. Extra-curricular activities enhance the main curriculum with a good range of well-attended activities. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities well.

*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 leadership provided by the headteacher is central to the school's success. Because all share a clear vision, ambition is clearly communicated and the drive for improvement is excellent. The headteacher takes an active part in teaching and provides the inspiration for the direction in which the school continues to develop. For example, through stories told in an assembly, she challenges pupils' feelings, such as about what is fair and right, and encourages their choice to reject unfairness and discrimination, reflecting the school's good promotion of equal opportunities. She has built a team of teachers, support staff and senior managers who share her values, which makes the school a very cohesive entity. The headteacher receives good support from her deputy headteacher, who provides an excellent role model for teaching and learning. All teachers are actively engaged in the tracking of pupils' progress, which is rigorous and for which teachers are held to account. Governors possess a wide range of skills and experience and are enthusiastic advocates for the school. They work effectively in committees and offer a good level of challenge and support.

The leadership of the school ensures that all procedures relating to safeguarding pupils

**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

are exemplary and ensures their health and safety through very high-quality care and a rigorous analysis of risk. Leaders and staff have worked tirelessly to build and sustain a close partnership with parents and carers, and have established very effective links with neighbouring schools and with services for children in the local authority. The school promotes community cohesion well. Leaders ensure that pupils make a good contribution to the wider local and global community through the school's teaching of respect for all people and its active promotion of charity and aid work.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</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>1</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>1</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**

An increasing number of children entering the Reception class have experienced pre-school education. Overall, they enter school with levels of skill and knowledge that are below those typical of children of this age. A significant number enter well below expected levels. The caring and nurturing ethos in the class enables children to settle quickly and to relate to each other well. They form friendships and develop their social skills. The quality of provision in the class is appropriate and is responsible for children's satisfactory progress. Children's more formal learning is planned and purposeful. While there is a great deal of assessment information available, it is not used well to provide children with suitable opportunities to follow their interests in self-chosen activities. Often the choice is too wide and learning is at a superficial level. On occasion, adult-led activities last too long and inhibit independent opportunities for learning. The space available for children to play outside the classroom is adequate in its extent and quality, and adults make the best possible use of the facilities. There are plans to provide a canopy to enable children to play outdoors in all weather. Leadership and management



**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

of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Resources are managed well, children's progress is assessed and there are good relationships with parents and carers. Teaching support is effective, although with up to 30 children in the class, learning is best when extra help is available. For example, additional support had a significant positive impact in the quality of learning in the role-play area.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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	3

## Views of parents and carers

There were 49 responses to the inspection questionnaire. The responses were positive and supportive of the school although a small number of parents and carers expressed some concerns related to the information they receive about their child's progress, help they receive to support learning, dealing with unacceptable behaviour and the quality of leadership and management. Nonetheless, many comments were extremely positive, including those about the way in which the school cares for and supports pupils, how good the teaching is and the good progress made by pupils. Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' overwhelmingly positive views. Evidence gathered by inspectors illustrates the effective strategies used to encourage good behaviour, the good-quality information about pupils' progress, how effectively parents and carers are helped to support their children's learning and the high-quality leadership and management.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Atherton St George's 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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 168 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	62	63	26	27	6	6	4	4
The school keeps my child safe	50	51	38	39	6	6	4	4
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	41	40	41	14	14	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	43	54	55	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	49	44	45	6	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	47	38	39	14	14	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	33	62	64	2	2	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)	38	40	50	53	2	2	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	37	54	55	4	4	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	37	46	47	4	4	12	12
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	37	54	55	8	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	39	50	51	10	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	51	42	43	4	4	2	2

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.**



15 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Atherton St George's C of E Primary School, Manchester, M46 0HJ

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school for its recent inspection. We appreciated your politeness and enjoyed talking with you. We were impressed that you demonstrated many mature attitudes in your personal development. You have an excellent knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe and adopt healthy lifestyles. You make an excellent contribution to the school and the wider community. Very well done! We have judged your behaviour to be good. In addition to these very positive attributes, you also make good progress in your learning and reach the expected standards by Year 6.

Your school is led and managed well. All adults play their part in the smooth running of the school and wanting the best for you. Your headteacher, the teachers and teaching assistants give good help and support and the governors keep a close eye on the school. Through the hard work of the adults the school provides you with outstanding levels of support, guidance and care, and good teaching. The subjects you learn are interesting too and it is good to hear about your involvement in the school council, the eco council and your fundraising for so many good causes. We know you enjoy these activities, along with your after-school clubs and the many visitors.

So what does the school need to do to get even better? We have asked your leaders to build on the school's existing strengths and improve your standards in writing further. In addition, we have asked the school to use its assessment information to help children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make better progress and to have a good balance of learning activities led by adults and those the children can choose themselves. You attend a good school with many things that are outstanding. Congratulations!

Every good wish for the future!

Yours faithfully

Mr Michael Onyon

Lead Inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**