



# St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Balderstone

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105804  
**LEA** Rochdale  
**Inspection number** 277414  
**Inspection dates** 10 October 2005 to 11 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Margaret Lewis CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Oldham Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Rochdale
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Lancashire OL11 2HB
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 648 125
<b>Number on roll</b>	208	<b>Fax number</b>	01706 750 624
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr C Durrans
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julia Sandiford-Mitchell

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 10 October 2005 - 11 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277414
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

---

© Crown copyright 2006

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

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

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.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two contracted additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is an average sized Voluntary Controlled Church of England School It is a popular school with a waiting list. Pupils come from a mostly white British background with a very low proportion of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils have English as an additional language.

The school is housed in a Grade 2 listed building so that any alterations are subject to planning permission. It serves an urban area with higher than average social and economic deprivation. An above average proportion of pupils, about a third, are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a few looked after children.

An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. No pupil currently has a statement of special educational need.

The school gained the Basic Skills Quality Mark in July 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school. Inspectors confirm the school's view of itself. Pupils like coming to school and behave well. Parents have very positive views about the school and appreciate the help it gives to their children. Pupils' personal development is good but there are too few opportunities for them to work independently. The school recognises that more could be done to improve attendance levels by working further with parents and pupils. Provision in the reception class is good and pupils settle quickly into school. Although they start school with low levels of attainment, test results in 2004 show that pupils make good progress and reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. The school is led and managed well. Every child matters and is at the heart of the school's work. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection and the school is well placed to improve further. It provides good value for money.

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

- Improve levels of attendance further by working closely with parents and pupils;
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to learn independently and to develop their own ideas and thinking skills.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are improving and pupils make good progress in relation to their low standards on entry to the school. Test results in 2004 and unpublished results for 2005 show that pupils in Year 6 made good progress, some made very good progress, and reached broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. In 2004 the school was in the best 5% of schools in the country based on pupils' achievement in relation to their attainment when they started in Year 3. This group of pupils achieved well all through the school. School data show that pupils in the current Years 2 and 6 are achieving well and the team agrees. Pupils start school with skills that are well below average, particularly in language and literacy and mathematical development. Although they make good progress by the end of the reception year, most are still working towards the levels expected of them. In Years 1 and 2 pupils continue their good progress as they learn the key skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are troubled receive good help and support and do well. The school has recently set challenging but realistic targets for their achievement.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Close attention to their personal development and well-being is at the heart of the school community. Pupils like coming to school and feel it is a

good place to be. They are eager to participate in activities after school as well as those offered during the school day. They appreciate the opportunity to learn a range of foreign languages and feel it will help them as they grow up. In lessons pupils usually behave well and comply well with class rules. However, they are not all always eager to contribute to discussion and take the initiative for their own learning. At playtimes they play happily and amicably together. The arrangements for staggered playtimes work well and help pupils develop good social skills. Attendance levels are satisfactory but are adversely affected by the number of families taking holidays during term time. The school recognises that more could be done to work with parents to overcome this problem. Pupils rise to the school's expectations of them to play their part in the school community. Many take on responsible roles such as school councillors, playground friends or being part of the Environmental (Eco) committee, and contribute very well to the running of the school. Pupils understand well the importance of keeping safe and healthy.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to make good progress. Improvements in the quality of teaching are helping raise standards and achievement throughout school. Pupils say lessons are not boring because teachers are good at making learning interesting and fun. Teachers and support staff work closely together to provide a supportive learning environment. The team teaching situation in Year 6 is particularly well planned and organised for the benefit of pupils of all abilities. This helps them accelerate their learning. Throughout the school there is a strong emphasis on language and developing skills of speaking and listening, though teachers place less emphasis on encouraging pupils to present their work neatly. Pupils respond well to role play situations. Displays are used well to focus pupils' attention on key vocabulary in all subjects. Lessons are planned carefully so that pupils work at an appropriate level. Teachers set high expectations of behaviour and are skilled at promoting good behaviour. Some potentially challenging pupils are managed successfully so as not to interrupt the learning of others. However, there are times when teachers have to work hard to get all pupils to offer answers to their questions and contribute to discussion. Teachers' detailed assessments ensure that pupils with additional learning needs get the extra help they need from an early stage. Pupils say their teachers are helpful because they take time to explain things. Most pupils know their targets and how they need to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school judges the curriculum as good and inspectors agree that it is. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and strongly promotes pupils' learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is planned in a way that makes learning interesting.

Bright and lively displays, focused on learning, celebrate pupils' achievements and help create an attractive environment. The personal, health, social cultural and emotional development programme is comprehensive and helps pupils gain a good understanding of how to keep fit, safe and healthy. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is stimulating and exciting. Children learn effectively through activities and play and this gives them a good start.

The curriculum is greatly improved by a good range of very well-attended clubs and activities in and beyond the normal school day that greatly extends pupils' learning and personal development. Their knowledge of the outside world is enriched through visits, visitors and several modern foreign languages which are taught in all year groups. As a result of this strong programme all pupils including those with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about all the interesting, exciting activities offered to them.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good level of care for all pupils. Arrangements for health and safety are rigorous. Staff are well informed in matters relating to child protection. They know the pupils well. Pupils in public care are very well looked after and their individual needs monitored carefully. Pupils feel there is always someone to whom they can turn for help should the need arise. As a result they are happy and can get on with their learning. Parents are impressed by the level of support given to their children and rightly feel it helps them make good progress in their work. The concern for pupils' welfare extends to the promotion of healthy lifestyles. The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award in recognition of this. The before and after school clubs provide continuity of care and are appreciated by parents.

The school co-ordinates effectively the wide range of initiatives that are available to provide the best possible support for all pupils. Being part of the Behaviour Improvement Programme has helped raise the achievement of pupils over the last few years and improved the overall behaviour in school. Exclusions are now rare.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are judged by the school to be good. The inspectors agree with this. School improvement and self evaluation have been an important focus over recent years and as a result standards have risen significantly, pupils make good progress and achieve well. All pupils are valued highly and great efforts are made by staff to help all to succeed. Parents are highly delighted with the school and the progress that their children make. They feel that the school is good at getting the best out of its pupils. Pupils express their views frequently through a well-established School Council and have succeeded in bringing about changes. The headteacher and staff work together effectively as a team and the forward thinking school improvement plan strongly reflects the outcomes of the recent guidelines for Every Child Matters.

Pupils' performance is regularly and carefully checked. A significant contribution to pupils' progress is made by good quality teaching assistants and additional part time teachers who are deployed well. Improvements since the last inspection have been good and have accelerated recently under the management of the current headteacher. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Governors are very supportive and closely involved with the work of the school through regular visits, links to curriculum subjects and aspects of the school's work. They are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
--	-----------------------	--------------

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

N/A

Mrs McIntosh and I really enjoyed our visit to your school. We want to thank you for being so helpful and for talking to us about all the things you like to do. You had so many interesting things to say. We would like to tell you what we thought of your school.

We think that St Mary's is a good school.

- All the teachers and adults in the school care for you and want you to do well
- Your teachers do a good job of making lessons fun and making sure you work hard
- Your behaviour is good
- You are taught many good things, especially about how to treat others and to keep fit and healthy
- The teachers expect you to work hard and you all do your best in your lessons to improve
- We were very pleased to see how many opportunities you have to take part in clubs and activities after school. You all say how much you enjoy them
- There are many good things happening in your school
- To help to make sure you always have the chance to do your very best we have asked your teachers to give you more opportunities to work independently and improve your thinking skills and ideas. We have also asked your headteacher to make sure that you miss school as little as possible during term time.

Keep on working hard and enjoying school.