

Masefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105193
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377196
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2012
Lead inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	326
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Mancini
Headteacher	Claire Hope
Date of previous school inspection	21 October 2008
School address	Masefield Road Little Lever Bolton BL3 1NG
Telephone number	01204 333714
Fax number	01204 333531
Email address	office@masefield.bolton.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson

Chris Griffin

Zahid Aziz

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out at two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons taught by nine teachers, talked to pupils and reviewed some of their work. Meetings were held with staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. In addition, inspectors took account of 90 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff members. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including that relating to safeguarding pupils, the curriculum, the school's self-evaluation, governing body meetings, national assessment data and the school's assessment of pupils' progress.

Information about the school

More than 90% of pupils in this average-sized primary school are White British. A higher than average proportion is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The school meets the current floor standard. Before- and after-school care is available on site. This is not managed by the governing body and is inspected separately. The school has Healthy School status and also holds the Activemark, Artsmark and Leading Parent Partnerships 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Good improvement since the previous inspection has resulted in pupils making good progress and achieving well from below typically expected starting points. It is not outstanding because too little teaching is of that quality. Nonetheless, pupils made better than expected progress in writing in 2011 from their prior attainment levels and are on track to do the same in the current year.
- The quality of teaching is good with some which is outstanding. Pupils learn in a supportive environment where their contributions are valued by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils say that lessons are fun. There are good opportunities for them to improve writing skills across different subjects. Phonics (the teaching of letters and their sounds) is taught systematically in Key Stage 1, but not in Key Stage 2 where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and ability to spell correctly. Older pupils do not read independently as frequently as they should.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school, a view fully endorsed by parents and carers. They strongly oppose any kind of bullying and state that occasional name calling does not single out particular groups or backgrounds. Their good learning is witness to their attentiveness, enthusiasm, good behaviour and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall.
- Clear ambition from senior leaders and the governing body and a strong corporate drive for improvement have moved the school on since the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is robust and involves all stakeholders giving clear direction as to the school's successes and areas for improvement such as pupils' achievement in English. Teaching is managed well and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support the school. The extent of their engagement with the school is summarised in the comment, 'I am very involved and feel that the school values my opinion and that of other parents.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' achievement in English by:
 - providing systematic teaching of phonics in Key Stage 2
 - establishing a robust approach to the teaching of spelling throughout the school
 - promoting frequent independent reading among all pupils.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils learn well in lessons. They behave well and their good attitudes contribute to their good progress. They particularly enjoy testing their ideas with partners because this gives them confidence when answering questions. Year 2 pupils, for example, improved their mathematical thinking about fractions by discussing with partners the different ways of showing half of a shape. Resources are used imaginatively by teachers to ensure all are included in learning. In a history lesson, the wonder of discovery and learning was promoted well for Years 3 and 4 pupils when the teacher simulated the search for historical artefacts by burying some items in paper and carefully revealing them, sending out the clear message that 'to spoil the object is to spoil history'. Pupils receive good support for their learning from teachers' marking and the clear targets that allow pupils to keep a check on their own progress. Pupils develop writing skills well and speaking and listening are good because of the way teachers expect answers to be clearly explained. Spelling, however, is a significant weakness and is not underpinned in Key Stage 2 by a systematic approach linking reading and writing skills directly.

Pupils make good progress from entering the Nursery with skills below those typically expected, particularly in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of Reception, because of good provision, which includes some excellent teaching in the Nursery, most are working securely within the early learning goals. Pupils continue to build on this good start throughout the school and achieve well to reach average standards in mathematics and English by the time they leave Year 6. Standards in English faltered in 2011 due an earlier period of uncertain teaching for that cohort but have now recovered in the current year. Progress in writing in Year 6 has been good for the past two years at least. Inspection evidence and pupils' current work indicate good improvement in attainment in English and mathematics. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well. Effective revision of the way in which support is targeted is now showing impact and pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. Precise individual targets, frequent reviews and a better range of support in classrooms have helped to bring this about. Attainment gaps identified for some pupils known to be eligible for free school meals have also been targeted by the school. Rigorous monitoring of their progress and effective teaching have resulted in those gaps beginning to close.

Pupils' attainment in reading at the end of both key stages is average. Good progress in Key Stage 1 is underpinned by the effective system in place for phonics teaching. In Year 6, although reading is generally fluent, few pupils give independent reading a high priority and phonics does not support accuracy in spelling well enough.

Quality of teaching

Virtually all parents and carers who returned questionnaires, and the pupils themselves, agree that teaching is good. Teachers gain good knowledge of their pupils' learning through effective assessment and analysis of their progress. This enables them to focus on the skills pupils need and to cater for the range of abilities within their classes. They maintain high expectations and manage lessons well so that pupils get the most from their learning. Communication skills are developed well through the curriculum. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to talk in lessons for a variety of purposes, for example, to discuss an idea, explain an answer or, as in Year 1, to interview the 'Wicked Witch from the West'. Teachers use a good range of strategies to help enliven lessons. There is always sufficient time for practical work, which was set up well in one mathematics lesson by the teacher's use of a camera which relayed her practical demonstration directly to the electronic whiteboard so that every pupil could see.

Teachers and teaching assistants work well together during lessons. They monitor pupils' progress, engage them in discussion to move their thinking on and, when necessary, remind pupils about the presentation of their work, which is generally good. Teachers' subject knowledge is good, and their enthusiasm rubs off on the pupils to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The wonder of learning, for example, was seen in the Nursery where children were enraptured by their teacher's telling of a much-loved story about toys coming to life. In Reception pupils were fascinated by the discovery that sugar and salt dissolve when stirred in water. Pupils' social skills are developed well throughout the school by opportunities to work with partners or as group members. Pupils are encouraged to be independent and at times are given opportunities to say what they want to learn next about a topic.

Nevertheless, within this good picture of teaching quality there are some inconsistencies. Occasionally, pupils learning would benefit from more explanation and more manageable tasks to build up skills step-by step. On other occasions pupils' learning is hindered because the teacher's organisation of the classroom prevents pupils from seeing what is displayed.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say that they have no concerns about their safety. They are confident that adults are there to help when needed and that that they are well cared for. That view is shared fully by parents and carers. Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying and say they are prepared to help if they see any taking place. There is only occasional name-calling if there is a disagreement in the playground. Pupils know how to keep out of harm's way outside school. They are aware of potentially dangerous places to play and of the emotional hazards that can arise from misuse of the internet and cyber bullying. Pupils also conduct themselves safely around the school. They are fully aware of the possible dangers on the staircases, for example, and move around the building in a sensible and well behaved manner.

Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered. They are mindful of one another and respectful towards adults. They have a strong sense of what is right and wrong and of 'fair play', and feel that issues are managed fairly by teachers. Pupils are tolerant of others' differences and enjoy learning in a harmonious community. This shows some of the impact of the school's good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils contribute well to the everyday life of the school and all have a voice in school

matters via the school council. Attendance is above average and continuing to rise in the current year. Pupils arrive at school punctually and ready to learn. The vast majority of parents and carers, as well as pupils, feel that behaviour is good in school.

Leadership and management

The clear vision for improvement is clearly articulated by senior leaders and the governing body to all staff. Staff members typically comment that they enjoy working in the school and feel valued and included as part of a team. They understand their individual roles and know how they are accountable for standards and quality. Senior leaders monitor and provide good support for teachers. Effective management by the headteacher and well-targeted professional development have seen the elimination of inadequate teaching and the emergence of teaching that is consistently good, strengthening the school's capacity for sustained improvement, which is now good.

The governing body knows the school well and strongly holds it to account. It rightly holds the view that achievement reflects what happens in classrooms and monitors outcomes robustly. As a consequence, improvement in mathematics since the previous inspection is secure, and standards in English are rising. Safeguarding is given a high priority. Systems for checking the suitability of those who work in school are thorough and all relevant training is up to date. The governing body is constantly watchful over the safety of the site.

The curriculum enthuses pupils and helps them to achieve well across a range of subjects. It is enriched particularly by provision for French and music as well as opportunities for pupils to write reflectively and promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. For example, a Year 2 pupil wrote a very moving letter to a friend advising on how to deal with bullying while another wrote sensitively about what might be found in the 'ideal classroom'. However, independent reading and well structured systems for spelling do not feature strongly. A good calendar of clubs after school and a residential visit provide a further boost to pupils varying skills and interests. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and challenges all forms of discrimination vigorously. Pupils' academic and pastoral needs are carefully monitored and action is taken to ensure every pupil has the opportunities to achieve well.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



16 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Masefield Primary School, Bolton, BL3 1NG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. It was a pleasure to share some of our time with you and find out how much you enjoy school. You are very polite and well mannered and you behave well in and out of the classroom. Your attendance is above average and rising. Well done. It is very important so do keep it up. Besides, you would not want to miss those fantastic 'wake and shake' sessions!

Masefield is a good school because you make good progress and achieve well. Your teachers work hard and make your lessons good fun. Your good learning is helped by your good listening and hard work. The grown-ups in school look after you well and you take good care of one another. That helps everyone to feel safe. However, we think that your spelling could be improved and that you could spend more time reading on your own.

To help your school to improve further we have asked teachers to help you become better at English by introducing similar kind of phonics lessons for pupils in Key Stage 2, to those in Key Stage 1, at the right level, of course! We have also asked them to teach spelling much more thoroughly than at present and finally, to encourage more of you to read independently for pleasure. Perhaps you could help by joining a library and sharing the books you enjoy with a friend.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead inspector

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