

Flowery Field Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106183
Local authority	Tameside
Inspection number	377370
Inspection dates	13–14 March 2012
Lead inspector	Terry McDermott

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	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Slinn
Headteacher	Alvin Fell
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Terry McDermott
Melvyn Hemmings
Maureen Coleman

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 lessons taught by 16 teachers for a total of approximately 16 hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, listened to pupils reading, looked at the school's methods for tracking pupils' progress, and at a range of school documents, including its policies, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring records and samples of pupils' work. Responses from 151 parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire were considered, along with questionnaires completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a well above average sized two form entry primary school. The school is located on a split site. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are housed in a separate building a short walk away from the building housing Key Stage 1 pupils and Early Years Foundation Stage children. The majority of pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of these pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. The school has achieved recognition by the National College of School Leadership as a 'Hub School' for work leading curriculum change. The school has experienced significant recent leadership disruption. The acting headteacher has been in post since February 2012.

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. It is good rather than outstanding because senior leaders have not always measured the amount of learning in lessons with sufficient rigour. The newly refined and innovative curriculum robustly underpins pupils' good learning and good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Achievement is good. From starting points which are usually well below average, pupils make good progress through school to reach broadly average levels of attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The school's accurate assessment and tracking system indicates that progress is good overall in each phase of the school.
- Teaching is good overall, though there are some inconsistencies in every phase of the school. All lessons are characterized by very good relationships between adults and pupils, and by pupils' positive attitudes to learning. The best lessons are exciting and challenge pupils to think for themselves. Good assessment systems quickly identify pupils who may need additional support to boost their learning. Marking does not always tell pupils what they need to do to improve. Sometimes, teachers spend too long giving the same explanation for all pupils in their class.
- Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the buildings. Pupils play sensibly. They take good care of each other and of their school. They say that bullying is rare and always addressed. Pupils can be trusted to work independently. When given the opportunity to the responsibility, they respond well.
- The acting leadership team is open, honest and diligent. They have pulled together as the need for a concerted approach became apparent. They are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities in moving the school forward and maintained pupils' good progress. They share the same aspirations for the pupils. Their whole-school self-evaluation is accurate. However, leaders acknowledge that the monitoring of teaching and, subsequently, pupils' learning, is not always as rigorous as it should be. Nonetheless, parents and carers express their complete confidence in the work of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rigour of the leadership and management of teaching by:
 - monitoring and evaluating more closely the amount of learning taking place in lessons
 - sharing the responsibility for monitoring learning in lessons more widely.

- Improve the consistency and quality of teaching by:
 - reducing the time spent giving extended instructions or explanations
 - giving pupils more time and opportunities to find things out for themselves
 - ensuring that marking gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

The large majority of children join the school with skills and capabilities which are well below the expectations for their age. The communication, language and listening skills of many are particularly underdeveloped. Children progress well and begin to catch up in reading and writing because of the skilful phonics (the sounds that letters make) teaching they receive. Staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage make effective use of resources both indoors and outside, and get children off to a good start in all areas of learning. Children quickly learn to cooperate and work and play together. The good relationships they develop in Early Years Foundation Stage are maintained as they grow older.

Parents and carers are right to believe that pupils make good progress in all phases of the school. Pupils' attainment in reading is very close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 because basic reading skills are taught frequently, regularly and skilfully. Pupils make good use of their knowledge of letters and sounds to tackle new words. They read regularly and enthusiastically. This is enhancing their confidence in reading aloud. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is now a little above the national average at the end of Year 6. Thoughtful and well-founded rearrangements to the curriculum and the deployment of staff are ensuring that pupils continue to make better than average progress as they move through school and into Year 6. All pupils, including those learning English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make better progress than is found nationally, irrespective of their starting points.

Learning in lessons is good and pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are always keen to try something different and find things out for themselves. They listen closely to teachers' instructions and politely to their peers. This helps them to deepen their understanding by hearing alternative explanations. They sustain their concentration well when work is of a practical nature. The standard of presentation in pupils' books is inconsistent, because the quality of teachers' marking is variable.

Quality of teaching

Classrooms in both buildings are spacious, colourful and attractive places for learning. They are well resourced and provide inspiration for pupils' curiosity about the world around them. Very good relationships between adults and pupils are a common feature of all lessons. This is the result of pupils' continuing good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they move through the school. The best lessons are well planned and teachers make clear to pupils what they are going to learn about. They present a range of practical tasks, well matched to pupils' individual learning needs, which challenge them to try or find out things out for themselves. Sometimes, the pace of lessons slows when teachers restrict opportunities for independent thinking and learning or spend too long giving the same extended explanation to the whole class. The more able pupils sometimes finish quickly and then wait patiently, or sometimes not patiently, for their next instruction. This means their progress is not as good as it might be. Sometimes, when the pace and challenge of learning slows, pupils impatiently call out answers in class. Teachers do not always address this firmly enough.

The large majority of lessons move forward at a pace from one short sharp task to another. For example, in an outstanding Year 1 Art lesson, pupils rapidly became enthralled with the work of Guiseppe Arcimboldo. The extensive resources provided by the teacher gave them first-hand opportunities to create their own work in his style. They took photographs of each others' work for future reference and to widen their interpretations. Every pupil was engaged very seriously in innovative and memorable activities. The lesson then moved rapidly on to drawing and writing about what they had just done. The sense of achievement and enjoyment was high, and the wide range of learning was remarkable.

In most lessons, teachers and other adults move around the different groups in the class. They guide and inspire pupils to think for themselves with questions which often begin with 'Why do you think that is?' Pupils rise to the challenges they are set, particularly when the work is practically based. Teachers make regular use of opportunities, often through discussion with partners, for pupils to explain and to clarify their understanding, and to increasingly involve them in self-assessment. This builds trust, thoughtfulness and respect for the feelings of others. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and play an important role in supporting different groups of pupils. This ensures that pupils make the same good progress over time, particularly disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. Most lessons provide many well-planned opportunities for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills across the curriculum. Writing and reading skills are systematically taught and practised in many subjects throughout the school, though particularly in Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Parents and carers are justifiably very positive about the quality of teaching in the school, and about how the school encourages them to be involved in their children's learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The vast majority of pupils arrive on time, ready to learn. Their attendance is above average because, they say, 'We've got lots of friends here', and 'We learn loads of different stuff'. Behaviour is good throughout school as parents, carers and pupils maintain. Pupils explain confidently how they know they are safe in school. They can outline the potential dangers they may face outside the school, including road traffic, the misuse of the internet or smoking. Parents and carers have extremely positive views about pupils' safety and, without exception, feel their children are well looked after. The school maintains detailed records of any unacceptable behaviour. These incidents are becoming increasingly rare, as the school's recently adopted 'Assertive Mentoring' philosophy successfully takes effect. The small numbers of pupils whose behaviour sometimes gives cause for concern are managed very successfully. Pupils and parents and carers comment that incidents of bullying have fallen markedly. They express confidence that any incidents are swiftly and appropriately dealt with. Links with parents and carers are strong, and this provides very solid grounding for the excellent relationships between pupils and staff maintained throughout the school.

Values of cooperation, tolerance and understanding are consistently modeled by adults throughout the school. This builds a noticeably calm learning atmosphere. As a result, pupils are polite, friendly and considerate to each other, to visitors and to the environment. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They leave school as considerate young citizens well prepared for their future lives.

Leadership and management

The calm leadership of the acting headteacher has ensured stability in turbulent times. He is well supported by the wider acting leadership team. The maintenance of pupils' good progress has been sustained by the recent successful curricular changes they have overseen. Subject coordinators, though inexperienced in their leadership roles, are strong willed, thoughtful and well informed. They form part of a leadership group well able to sustain developments in times of change. The school has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to move forward.

All staff have engaged enthusiastically in continuing professional development to enhance their evaluation skills. However, leaders recognise, rightly, that when observing lessons they need to be more rigorous when evaluating the amount of learning and progress taking place. Monitoring is not yet spread widely throughout the entire leadership team.

The governing body has high aspirations for the school. Its members are active, knowledgeable and hard working in supporting the school. They know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They ensure that the school has good procedures to promote safeguarding and ensure that all staff are suitable to work with children.

The curriculum is good overall, though some aspects are outstanding. A large proportion of the school's work is planned around topics, currently 'Superheroes', which usually begin with a visit or visitor. They provide many opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in a range of circumstances. Links between different subjects are strong and explicit. A wide range

of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including 'Wii-play', sport, singing, subject boosters and homework clubs take place during and after the school day. Pupils say they like the chance to work with their teachers and teaching assistants outside the normal classroom environment. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides a language-rich learning environment, with well-planned activities for children to select for themselves. There are good opportunities for all groups of pupils to take responsibilities and extend their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness skills. Excellent partnerships with its community, with other schools locally, with community groups and a wide range of external professionals, support pupils' learning well. These partnerships help ensure that every pupil, including those whose circumstances and other needs make them potentially vulnerable, is able to experience and benefit from all that the school has to offer. They reflect the school's success in promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination.

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.



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Flowery Field Primary School, Hyde, SK14 4SN

Thank you for sharing your thoughts and views with us, and for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed visiting you in your lessons. We were particularly impressed with the way you get on so well with each other and with the adults in your school. You pay good attention in lessons.

Flowery Field is a good school, and these are some of the best things about it.

- You make good progress in each Year in school and reach expected standards in English and mathematics by the time you reach the end of Year 6.
- The adults in school work very hard to keep you all safe and happy.
- You come to school very often. Your attendance and punctuality are good.

To help you learn even more and make better progress, we have asked the adults who run the school to make lessons more consistently even better by:

- checking much more closely that you are all learning as much as you should be in every lesson
- giving you more time and opportunity to find things out for yourselves
- making sure that when marking your work, teachers consistently tell you what you need to do to get better.

You also can help your school to get even better by always trying your best and continuing to enjoy and attend school. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Terry McDermott
Lead Inspector

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