

# Clarksfield Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133711
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	360579
<b>Inspection dates</b>	31 January 2011–1 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathleen McArthur

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Interim executive board
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Carole Cressey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Tricia O'Donnell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Grasmere Road Oldham Greater Manchester OL4 1NG
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 770 5400
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 624 7350
<b>Email address</b>	head@clarksfield.oldham.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 20 lessons taught by 14 teachers and visited small groups of pupils being taught by teaching assistants. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of staff, the chair of the interim executive board and representatives from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at safeguarding procedures and a range of school documentation, including national and school data, development and action plans. They scrutinised the 126 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and those completed by pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether attainment and progress are improving in all subjects, particularly in mathematics.
- How effective have leaders and managers been in speeding up the rate of school improvement and securing the capacity for further development?
- The effectiveness of the actions to raise the quality of teaching and learning.
- How well are pupils involved in assessing their own learning and improving their work so they know how to reach their targets?

## Information about the school

The school is much larger than most primary schools. Very nearly all the pupils are of Pakistani heritage who speak English as an additional language. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A high proportion of pupils has been identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools and Eco Schools status.

The school has experienced very significant staffing turbulence and disruption since the previous inspection, particularly at senior leadership level. There have been extended periods when the senior management team has been under strength. The local authority dissolved the governing body in July 2010 and an interim executive board (IEB) has been in place since September 2010.

**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?****3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

## Main findings

Clarksfield is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching. There are strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the way pupils are cared for, guided and supported. Pupils say they enjoy school, have positive attitudes to learning and contribute well to their school and local community. The very large majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers expressed positive views. A small minority had some concerns, including about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour and responds to their suggestions.

Achievement is satisfactory. Children start school with skills that are well below the expected level for their age, and most are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. They get a good start and progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, significant staffing disruption in recent years slowed progress and resulted in very low attainment as pupils moved through the school, mostly noticeably in Key Stage 2 and in mathematics. Rigorous actions were implemented to overcome this; the staff team was strengthened, more accurate assessment was implemented, and intensive professional support helped to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. Current school data shows challenging targets are being met, and progress is now satisfactory overall, but not yet fully consistently in all years as pupils move through school. Attainment is still low but improving and more pupils than in previous years are reaching the standards expected for their age. They do best in writing, but standards in reading and mathematics, although rising gradually, are not yet fully secure. Satisfactory support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and bilingual support for those learning English as an additional language ensures they make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Teaching is satisfactory and an increasing proportion is good. However, there is often too much 'teacher talk' and expectations are sometimes not high enough. Consequently, pupils are not always challenged or given sufficient opportunities to work independently, extend their learning and make faster progress. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to learning. Most pupils know their targets and say teachers' marking is helpful. However, some targets are too general, and the use of assessment information to set specific targets and match work accurately to pupils' needs is not yet secure in all classes. 'Creative Academies' is one example of initiatives introduced to develop the curriculum and broaden pupils' experiences. These have increased enjoyment, but are too new to have made a real impact on progress. The school takes good care of all pupils and guides and supports them well, reflected in good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel safe, know that visitors must wear badges and are sure they can turn to any member of staff for help. Behaviour is good, although a minority of pupils feel it could be better.

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Major turbulence at senior leadership level and staffing changes has hampered improvement since the previous inspection. Throughout this difficult period, the headteacher has maintained a clear vision for improvement and implemented appropriate actions to achieve this, fully supported by all staff. The IEB and other partnerships are providing knowledgeable support. Accurate self-evaluation is seen in focused development plans. Leaders and managers at all levels share responsibility for standards and achievement and staff are now accountable for their pupils' progress. Although at an early stage, academic outcomes are showing an improving trend while pupils' personal development is good. This demonstrates that capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in English and mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2 by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to discuss their work and infer meaning from their reading material, particularly in the classes for older pupils
  - extending the Key Stage 1 strategies for learning letters and sounds into Years 3 and 4
  - implementing a consistent method of calculation throughout the school
  - securing pupils' knowledge of basic number concepts and mathematical vocabulary so they can make more rapid mental calculations.
- Build on the best practice found in the school to raise the overall quality and consistency of teaching and learning from satisfactory to at least good by:
  - further raising expectations of what pupils can achieve so they are always challenged and make more rapid progress
  - increasing pupils' involvement with learning, and providing more opportunities for independent learning and research
  - ensuring assessment information is used in all classes to set more tightly focused, individual targets to secure rapid and consistent progress.
- Build on existing partnerships with parents and carers and the community so all feel welcomed, included and valued partners in the life of the school.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Throughout the school, good relationships and keen attitudes aid learning. Pupils say they learn a lot in lessons, and observations during the inspection showed that pupils make satisfactory, and sometimes good progress in lessons. They work cooperatively with staff and their classmates, and comment, 'The teachers help us with our work if we don't understand it.' They behave well, but can be over-enthusiastic, shouting out answers rather than waiting to be asked.

In recent years progress slowed in both key stages and many pupils did not do as well as they should have. However, inspection evidence, including lesson observations, the work

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in pupils' books and school data show that strategies to boost progress and raise attainment are becoming increasingly effective. Attainment is still low but improving across the school and pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6 are on course to reach challenging targets. Although progress is now satisfactory overall and for different pupil groups, some unevenness remains throughout the school due to the legacy of disruption. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities often make good progress when working in small groups, and pupils who speak English as an additional language perform as well as their national counterparts.

Small focused group activities have boosted Key Stage 1 pupils' progress in learning letters and sounds. In Key Stage 2, pupils' reading skills often lag behind their writing skills. The strategies for linking sounds and letters are not sufficiently continued into Years 3 and 4 to meet the needs of some pupils. They often struggle to infer meaning from text, which hinders their understanding of mathematical language and activities that require more advanced reading skills. Insecure knowledge of basic number concepts hinders pupils' mental ability to calculate swiftly and accurately, and different methods of calculation are used across the school, which can confuse pupils.

Pupils are polite and welcoming and say their school is a 'friendly place' where they feel safe. They know the health benefits of diet and exercise; are keen patrons of the lunchtime salad bar and take up all the sporting activities on offer. They reflect thoughtfully on personal issues and choices, and develop a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to think about their behaviour and say bullying is not a problem; they respect the code of rewards and consequences. They make a good contribution to the school and local community, and are keen to take on responsibility. They are working with pupils from other local schools to produce a DVD, aimed at reducing vandalism and graffiti in the local area. Applying for jobs via the school's 'Job Centre' helps them learn about the world of work and contributes to satisfactory preparation for future economic well-being. Attendance is average, due to significant efforts to promote better attendance, but a number of pupils do not always arrive on time.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<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>3</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>

<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

**How effective is the provision?**

School monitoring and inspection evidence show the proportion of good teaching is increasing, but also that some inconsistencies remain. Lessons are usually well organised, pupils know what they will learn and effective use of the interactive whiteboards captures their interest. Enthusiastic, well-deployed classroom assistants are a strength, particularly when supporting learning in small groups targeted to particular language or specific needs. Too often, pupils have to listen passively to their teachers with few opportunities for practical, interactive learning. The whole-school assessment system has yet to be fully embedded. Some good examples of assessment information being used carefully to plan learning that meets individual needs were observed, but this is not consistent in all classes. Pupils' books are marked, and in some classes, pupils respond to their teacher's comments that help them improve. However, assessing how well they think they are doing is a new skill for most pupils.

The curriculum covers all basic skills, provides a good personal and social education programme and is suitably adapted for all groups of pupils. Provision for pupils in Year 1 has been adapted to ensure continuity and consolidate progress from the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. Links between subjects are not yet fully embedded to really impact on learning and progress. Pupils have limited opportunities to use information and communication technology as a learning tool, for example, for independent research. They particularly enjoy and value aspects that successfully enrich the curriculum. For example,

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the variety of lunchtime and after-school clubs, trips out and the new 'Creative Academies', and the provision of swimming in the school pool is a real bonus.

The school is a welcoming learning environment where good quality care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to pupils' confidence and well-being. Pupils who are potentially vulnerable because of their circumstances are well supported, and effective relationships with all external welfare agencies benefit these pupils and their families. Links with the local children's centre and effective transition arrangements ensure pupils move confidently to the next stages of their education. Rigorous procedures, including home visits, have raised attendance levels and the attendance policy has been shared with other schools as a model of good practice. The learning mentors work sensitively with families and individual pupils whose absences may hinder their progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Outcomes of senior leaders' monitoring, fed back to staff and linked to performance management targets, are helping improve the quality of teaching. The proportion of good teaching has increased steadily, but there is more to be done to secure consistently good practice. The development of leaders at all levels is given due priority and middle leaders are assuming an increasingly significant role in the drive to raise attainment and accelerate progress. The IEB brings skilled, experienced support and is well aware of what needs to be done to meet challenging targets. Regular forums held by the parents' champion enable parents and carers to exchange views and information, and weekly newsletters and text messages keep them informed. Good partnerships with the local authority and local schools are proving valuable in the drive for school improvement. The school is increasingly less reliant on this external support and has developed its own capacity.

Satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities ensures there is no discrimination, and all pupils can participate in everything the school offers. Well-organised support has successfully 'narrowed the gap' between pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their classmates. However, progress is not yet consistent across the school. Recent initiatives have accelerated pupils' progress but there is not yet sufficient good teaching to overcome a legacy of underachievement. Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and all staff have completed basic training. Pupils are well aware of security arrangements, for example, that visitors must wear badges, so they feel safe. The school reaches out to the community to establish links and extend pupils' knowledge of issues in



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the locality and wider world, but has yet to evaluate the impact of actions to promote community cohesion. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The great majority of children enter with skills well below those typical for their age, especially in language, mathematics and social skills, and many have little knowledge of the English language. The friendly, welcoming environment ensures they soon feel safe, secure and ready to explore the activities on offer. The well-balanced mix of activities chosen by the children and those led by adults result in good progress in all areas of learning, with the most rapid gains in personal and social skills. By the time children leave Reception, their skills are still below the expected levels.

'My child loves coming to school.' said one parent, and parents and carers are welcomed as partners in their children's learning, for example, through the 'Stay and Play' sessions. Children enjoy investigating the interesting range of learning activities. They behave well, become increasingly independent, follow routines cheerfully and happily decide when to have their snacks. Speech and language skills are developed at every opportunity; nursery children talked excitedly about how their hands were 'freezing' when they investigated trays of ice-cubes, and there are regular sessions to develop knowledge of sounds and letters ready for reading and writing. Reception children confidently counted in 10s to 100 and back to zero, but become restless when they have to wait too long to have their turn. Children love working outside, 'painting' the school walls with water or riding the bikes round a number trail.

Leaders and managers have established a strong, effective staff team, committed to further developing the setting to ensure all children progress well in all areas. Good

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procedures support welfare and children's well-being. Progress is carefully tracked and activities carefully planned to meet and support individual needs.

*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

About 30% of parents and carers returned questionnaires, which is average. The very large majority expressed positive views and were happy overall with their child's experience at school, their progress and the teaching. Children are helped to have a healthy lifestyle, enjoy school and are kept safe and the school meets their particular needs.

A small minority expressed less positive views about how the school helps them support learning at home, prepares children for the future, deals with unacceptable behaviour, and takes account of their views about leadership and management. The inspection team discussed all the issues raised with the school. The inspectors found that the school offers various courses for parents and carers to support learning. Good transition arrangements are in place between key stages in school and with the high schools. There is an established behaviour management system that pupils know, understood and say is fair. The school seeks parents' and carers' views, for example, about the attendance policy, and the parents' champion member of the IEB holds regular forums. The school's leadership and management have experienced an extended period of disruption and change and this is reflected in some of the responses.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Clarksfield 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 inspection team received 126 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 440 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	48	48	38	9	7	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	44	35	63	50	13	10	3	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	32	62	49	12	10	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	26	73	58	7	6	8	6
The teaching is good at this school	36	29	65	52	12	10	9	7
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	26	58	46	18	14	9	7
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	36	69	55	7	6	1	1
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)	28	22	65	52	19	15	9	7
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	25	65	52	15	12	9	7
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	18	66	52	26	21	7	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	12	62	49	30	24	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	22	17	71	56	16	13	13	10
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	42	33	59	47	12	10	10	8

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 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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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.**



2 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Clarksfield Primary School, Oldham, OL4 1NG**

I would like to thank you for welcoming the team during the inspection of your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about Clarksfield School. You must be proud of your swimming pool: not many schools have one of their own like you do. We were pleased to learn that you enjoy school and feel safe and your parents and carers agree.

This is what we found.

Clarksfield School gives you a satisfactory education. You are well cared for and get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. You certainly know how to be healthy and are keen to apply for jobs at the 'Job centre' and to help improve the local community. Your behaviour is good, but some of you think it could be better.

Progress in learning is beginning to speed up and more of you are reaching the right standards for your age. This has not always been the case so we have asked the school to help you make faster progress and reach higher standards by:

- giving you more opportunities to discuss your work and make sure you always understand what you are reading
- providing letters and sounds practice sessions in Years 3 and 4
- making sure you know all your number facts and use the same methods to calculate answers, especially in those mental mathematics sessions
- making sure that you are always taught well.

We have also asked the staff to make sure all parents and carers and members of the community feel included in the life of the school.

We send you our very best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector

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