

# Medlock Valley Community School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133710
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oldham
<b>Inspection number</b>	360578
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 June 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geoffrey Yates

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>	254
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Edward Moores
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jancie Garratt-Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Deanshut Road Fitton Hill, Oldham Greater Manchester OL8 2PN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed, taught by 10 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress and the school's monitoring, self-evaluation and planning for improvement. The inspectors also analysed 59 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- Whether the school has taken steps to ensure that pupils' learning and progress are at least good.
- How well the outside area in the Early Years Foundation Stage is planned and organised to meet children's needs.
- How successful staff are in using ongoing assessment and marking.
- How effective the leadership team is in ensuring the school improves on its previous best.
- Whether pupils' behaviour is good and if other outcomes of the school's provision are good or better.

## Information about the school

This is an above-average-sized primary school in which the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Since the last inspection, the school has become federated with another primary school and there is a joint governing body. An executive headteacher takes overall responsibility for both schools and there is a substantive headteacher in post at Medlock Valley.

**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. Inspirational and highly effective leadership by the executive headteacher and the school's headteacher is ensuring good improvement. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision has been improved and is of outstanding quality. Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils are cared for exceedingly well. Pupils' achievement is good and overall they make good gains in their learning and progress, although there is some fluctuation in pupils' progress in Key Stage 1. By the time pupils leave school, standards of attainment are broadly average in English and mathematics. The school has developed excellent partnerships with other professional organisations. Another outstanding area of the school's work is the pupils' contribution to the school and local community. While pupils' understanding of the school and local customs is strong, their knowledge and understanding of cultures different from their own are less well developed.

Children make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, from a starting point well below that typical for their age. That is the result of outstanding provision and leadership. In the rest of the school, the quality of teaching is good overall and improving, as is the curriculum which is imaginative and enriched well by visitors to school and educational visits. There is a focus on developing writing skills through cross-curricular links in some year groups, but less so in others. In some classes, the cross-curricular work provides insufficient challenge for more-able pupils. The learning needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those for whom English is an additional language are met well.

Teaching and learning are monitored effectively on a regular basis and action has been taken to eradicate inadequate teaching. All members of staff work very effectively to ensure the school provides a place where children enjoy their learning. Key elements in the school's growing success are the complementary skills of the executive headteacher and the school's headteacher and the work carried out by the experienced chair of governors. Middle leaders are becoming increasingly effective in leading their areas of responsibility. The two federated schools are supporting each other well and sharing expertise to the benefit of all. Self-evaluation is accurate. The school improvement plan focuses accurately on the right areas for improvement and this has had a positive impact, for example: initiatives to improve pupils' behaviour; work to increase pupils' progress especially in mathematics. Based on what has been achieved already, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

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

- Ensure pupils in Key Stage 1 make consistently good progress in order to raise attainment further by:

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- – providing them with higher levels of challenge
- – ensuring that lessons always move at a good pace.
- Improve curriculum provision by:
  - – providing opportunities for pupils in all classes to use and develop their writing skills in different subject areas
  - – ensuring that cross-curricular writing tasks provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils.
- Strengthen the promotion of community cohesion beyond the school and immediate area to enhance pupils' understanding of cultures different from their own, in the United Kingdom and around the world.

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

Pupils say how much they enjoy school. The lyrics of a song sung by one class during the inspection entitled 'The time of your life' reflected well the learning experience in that lesson. Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute strongly to good progress overall in lessons, good achievement and rising attainment. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges set by their teachers, use their initiative, and are keen to succeed. For example, one young pupil, engaged deeply in planting seeds, when asked to explain how the seeds might grow, replied confidently, 'The rain comes down and the roots soak it all up, with a bit of sun that makes them grow!' In another lesson, older pupils used a safe site on the internet to work out the potential cost of a holiday on a limited budget. They all worked together exceptionally well, concentrated hard and used their thinking skills productively to work out whether the cheapest flight with a stopover was a better option than a dearer direct flight.

When children enter the school, their level of development is well below that expected for the age group. They make good progress and attainment on entry to Year 1 is around the expected range. Pupils' progress in the rest of the school is good overall and, as a result, by the time pupils leave, the standard of attainment is in line with the national expectations in English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that standards of attainment are currently in line with national expectations in English and mathematics. Pupils are justifiably proud of the excellent contribution they make to the school and wider community. Whether they are engaged in class fund-raising, school council work, thinking of others in the 'wish you well' sessions, or other activities, they are highly committed to improving the school and their local community. Most pupils say they feel very safe in school. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting activities thoroughly and have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is clearly reflected in their caring attitudes.

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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>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>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>1</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?

Good relationships between staff and pupils and very clearly explained expectations underpin good teaching. Pupils are left in no doubt about what to do. Regular checks of pupils' understanding keep staff informed of how well pupils are learning so that adjustments can be made to a lesson's structure. Staff know pupils well and use assessment effectively to plan work that extends the pupils' existing knowledge and skills. At times in Key Stage 1, when teaching is occasionally less strong, the pace of lessons slows and the level of challenge is not high enough. Throughout the school, the techniques introduced to ensure pupils engage in discussions with a wide range of partners, such as those next to them and those who sit opposite, help pupils think and work things out for themselves. Good liaison between teaching and support staff keeps pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities fully involved in lessons.

The curriculum is of good quality. Pupils respond well to a wide range of activities to develop their academic and personal development. Recent moves to adjust the curriculum so that it is more imaginatively planned are having a positive impact on enjoyment to lessons. Pupils were keen during the inspection to ask inspectors what life was like in the 1960s and were keen to show inspectors their research findings. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities and there is a good take-up by pupils. Visiting specialist teachers and other enriching activities add much to the quality of curriculum provision. The quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding. The vast majority of parents and carers

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think very highly of the caring and supportive ethos within the school. The school works extremely well with a variety of agencies to support families and pupils in need. As a result, absence is declining and the achievement of specific groups of pupils, such as those who are known to be entitled to free school meals, has been raised. Pupils say they trust the support and guidance they are given. Great care is taken to ease the start of school for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and to ensure transition is good when pupils leave the school.

*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?

Since the last inspection, the federation of the two schools has brought strength to both. A key factor in the process of improvement has been the excellent partnerships established with the local community, the federated school and other outside organisations. Senior leaders have established a whole-school ethos such that all who work in the school play their part in ensuring continuous improvement. The school's priorities are the right ones. Middle leaders are held more accountable for their areas of responsibility than previously and their roles are developing well. A rigorous tracking system allows leaders and teachers to identify which pupils need extra support. Parents and carers appreciate the many improvements which have taken place. The reorganised governing body discharges its statutory duties well and is effective. That is because it is involved fully in decision making and has a committee structure that serves the needs of both schools well. The governing body has ensured that safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effective. Procedures and policies follow best practice, which is evident in all aspects of the school's work. Pupils take a lively interest in their own safety and that of others with, for example, a very young child being given responsibility for safety in part of the Early Years Foundation Stage accommodation. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and leaders and the governing body promote it well and are very active in tackling any form of discrimination. Community cohesion is promoted soundly. The school has close links within the local community, but links further afield to develop pupils understanding of cultures different from their own are at an early stage of development.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's level of development on entry to the Nursery is well below that expected for the age group. Children make good progress during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Currently, the majority are working at around the expected levels by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching is outstanding. Lessons take full account of children's interests in order to keep them well motivated and they include varied opportunities, both indoors and outside, for children to choose their own activities and develop independence. Highly skilled adults are deployed to work with this age group and they provide outstanding support. For example, in a guided reading session, children were taught key skills, challenged and supported in their development and given many opportunities to rehearse and consolidate their learning. Imaginative planning includes rich learning opportunities, particularly for speaking and listening. For example, a group of children working in the outside area 'found' mini beasts and were in deep discussion regarding why a moth they had discovered was not colourful like a butterfly. Leadership and management are outstanding and ensure high standards of welfare, with children's safety paramount, as well as excellent partnerships with parents and carers. Very good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly and their needs are accurately assessed. The assessment continues throughout the Nursery and Reception classes and enables staff to provide extremely effectively for the interests and abilities of all children. As a result, children enjoy their work, they are keen to learn and get on very well together.



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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## Views of parents and carers

Inspection questionnaires were returned from a small minority of parents and carers. The school has also recently undertaken its own survey of parents and carers views. Parents and carers hold mostly very positive views of the school, in particular about their children's enjoyment of learning and how well they are cared for. The inspection found learning and enjoyment to be good and care, guidance and support to be outstanding. Very few parents and carers expressed concerns about different aspects of the school's work. The inspection team discussed the concerns raised in relation to involving parents and carers more in helping their children at home and meeting children's individual needs with school leaders. They found the school to be fulfilling its duty well in those areas of its work.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Medlock Valley Community 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 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 254 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	64	19	32	1	2	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	39	66	19	32	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	31	53	22	37	4	7	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	26	44	29	49	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	51	28	47	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	41	30	51	5	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	41	34	58	1	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)	24	41	31	53	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	47	24	41	7	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	44	26	44	4	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	37	32	54	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	34	58	22	37	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	53	26	44	1	2	1	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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.**



10 June 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Medlock Valley Community School, Oldham, OL8 2PN**

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave to all the inspection team during the recent inspection of your school. What an excellent start you are given in the Early Years Foundation Stage! It was also good to see the rest of you work so hard in lessons. I agree with your school that it provides you with a good standard of education with some aspects that are better. The care, guidance and support your school provides for you are outstanding. The level of care helps you feel very safe and valued. You all get on together extremely well and your behaviour is good. It was a pleasure to listen to your discussions held with, for example, 'shoulder partners' and 'diagonal partners' and hear you sing in music lessons.

Your school is always looking for ways to make things better for you, so to help it do this, there are some things I am asking your school to do:

- make sure that pupils in Key Stage 1 make the best possible progress.
- find ways to ensure you use your writing skills well in subjects across the curriculum, especially those of you who are able to learn more advanced writing skills.
- carry out plans to improve your understanding of cultures that are different from your own, in other parts of Great Britain and the rest of the world.

I know you will all continue to work hard to play your part in making sure your school becomes even better. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mr Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector

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