

Clarksfield Primary School

Grasmere Road, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL4 1NG

Inspection dates

25–26 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Progress in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 has not been as rapid as that in other years as teachers' expectations are not always high enough.
- Teaching is not consistently good across the school as some lessons get off to a slow start and some do not immediately engage pupils.
- Girls' progress in mathematics is not improving at the same rate as that in English, as teaching does not always provide stimulating opportunities to apply basic skills.
- Strategies introduced by leaders and managers to raise the quality of teaching and accelerate progress are not yet fully effective.

The school has the following strengths

- The school has experienced much success in addressing the recommendations made in the previous inspection report.
- Pupils' progress by the end of Key Stage 2 has improved and most pupils reached nationally expected levels in 2012.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of the good quality provision and care they receive.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and are polite and courteous. They say they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is promoted effectively.
- Attendance is above average.
- Exceptionally strong links have been forged with the local community.
- Leaders, managers and governors are working well together. Weaknesses in teaching are being resolved and there have been clear improvements.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 19 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. Teachers' planning and pupils' books were scrutinised. In addition the inspection team made a number of short visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. Other meetings took place with members of the senior leadership team and middle managers.
- Inspectors also looked at a range of documentation, including data on pupils' progress, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors met informally with a small number of parents and held a telephone conversation with another. No comments were registered on Parent View.

Inspection team

Christine Millett, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
David Blackburne	Additional Inspector
Kirsteen Rigby	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Clarksfield is larger than the average-sized primary school. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage. A very small number are from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above the national average as is the number of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is also above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since the previous inspection there have been a significant number of changes in staffing including the appointment of a deputy headteacher, two assistant headteachers, business manager and a community development leader. A new governing body has replaced the Interim Executive Board.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistency in the quality of teaching throughout the school so that it is always good or better by:
 - using assessment information effectively to ensure tasks are always sufficiently challenging and that teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are consistently high
 - ensuring lessons start in brisk and exciting ways which grab and sustain pupils' interest and motivation.
- Raise levels of attainment in Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 by:
 - making sure pupils are always clear about how to achieve success
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in other curriculum subjects
 - ensuring that the teaching of mathematics engages all pupils, particularly girls, through stimulating opportunities for applying and using basic skills in problem solving
 - increasing pupils' involvement in self- and peer-assessment in all classes
 - expanding the impact of leadership and management by ensuring the recently introduced strategies to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning are fully effective in increasing the quality of teaching and raising attainment.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children start school with skills and knowledge that are often well below those expected for their age particularly in communication, language and literacy. They achieve well during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many start Year 1 still below expected levels. However, as a result of good provision, the proportion of children starting Year 1 at expected levels is increasing year-on-year.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 has been low over recent years with a sharp dip in mathematics which was not halted in 2011. There was evidence of underachievement in mathematics and English. Results were well below national averages at all levels, floor standards were not met and girls did not do as well as the boys.
- As a result of the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and the appointment of new staff the underachievement has been halted, although pupils' progress continues to require improvement. The unvalidated results of national tests in 2012 for pupils in Year 6 showed significant improvements. Attainment in English and mathematics improved strongly and floor standards were exceeded.
- Although progress requires improvement, it is accelerating. The percentage of pupils in Year 6 in 2012 making better than expected progress exceeded national averages. Inspection evidence and the school's tracking system show that pupils' current level of attainment and progress is on track to be maintained.
- It is too early to declare achievement as good, particularly as teaching still requires improvement. Certainly, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are accelerating their progress in response to stronger teaching. However, this is not the case in lower Key Stage 2 where progress in Years 3 and 4 has not been as rapid, particularly for girls in mathematics, and in writing generally.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics for a number of years. However, many pupils have made strong progress from their starting points in Year 1 and this is now improving at a faster pace. Current attainment indicates improvement, although writing and problem solving still lag slightly behind other skills.
- As a result of well-organised provision, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar levels of progress as their peers. This is also the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language and those known to be eligible for pupil premium. As a result, gaps between the different groups of pupils are closing. Girls are also doing better than in the previous year.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching over time requires improvement. No inadequate teaching was observed and this is an improvement for the school. Senior leaders have put in changes to improve teaching and there is an increase in good teaching but no evidence yet of outstanding teaching.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching and a well-organised curriculum. Skilled teaching by all staff ensures that children develop their basic skills well and learning flows between indoors and outdoors.
- Throughout the school pupils make good progress in the best lessons, when work is carefully matched to their varying abilities. This was clearly seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson: a group had access to different levels of work with the flexibility to move on to something more challenging once they had mastered the task. This ensured no time was wasted and pupils' interest was maintained as they moved to harder work.
- When teaching is effective pupils get off to a prompt start and girls and boys are engaged immediately by well-planned activities and opportunities to apply skills. Teachers have good

subject knowledge, ask skilful questions and insist pupils use correct vocabulary in their answers. Teachers circulate as pupils work and are on hand to talk through any misconceptions that may arise.

- Most lessons are managed well and pupils behave sensibly and are inspired to learn.
- The most proficient teachers create enjoyable and memorable learning experiences and pupils apply what they have learnt to other areas of the curriculum. However, this does not always happen. For example, pupils in Years 1 to 4 have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- Where learning is not as strong, assessment is not always used well to challenge pupils and expectations of achievement are too low. Pace is not always brisk enough to sustain pupils' interest with teacher talk limiting the time available for independent learning. These lessons lack sufficient excitement, especially in mathematics, and for girls, to apply their skills in a variety of topics.
- The use of success criteria in lessons is often used effectively so that pupils can check their own success. However, these are occasionally too complex and difficult for some of the younger pupils to read. Older pupils do not make full use of them in order to assess their own work or that of their partner.
- Teaching assistants are used effectively to support pupils with a range of needs such as bilingual support or intervention programmes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- There is a strong sense of community throughout the school. Pupils work and play well together. Well-ordered systems at lunchtime and playtimes, even when it is wet, ensure these are enjoyable times.
- Pupils develop a maturity and confidence in their dealings with adults and are courteous and friendly. They told inspectors that they consider school to be a safe and happy place to be.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly take on responsibilities. By Year 5 and 6, pupils have developed good team skills. They collaborate well in class and establish good relationships with adults and their peers.
- Pupils' well-established sense of right and wrong is developed through the curriculum and the caring philosophy of the school. This has ensured improving behaviour and relationships over time.
- Poor behaviour is rare because pupils receive good support from all adults and are helped to learn and adjust to situations. In lessons, pupils respond positively to adults. No lessons observed were disrupted by inappropriate behaviour. However, pupils' attention does wander when lessons fail to capture their imagination.
- Pupils understand the different types of bullying. They say instances are rare and have confidence in adults to deal with any incidents that may occur. Equality of opportunity exists across the school with pupils from different backgrounds getting on well together. The specific needs of pupils are well met.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes a safe and unsafe situation. The curriculum equips them for life through age-appropriate life skills, such as those experienced on outings and trips.
- Attendance is above average. School leaders, including members of the governing body, have worked hard to promote and celebrate good attendance with the result that there have been year-on-year improvements.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The clear vision of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is supported by all and is at the

heart of the drive to raise attainment. The relatively new leadership teams are starting to develop their roles and enhance provision. Effective self-evaluation means there is a sharp focus on the specific areas for development and expectations are rising.

- Following the previous inspection a comprehensive action plan was put in place to tackle identified weaknesses. Although aspects still require improvement the response can be seen in increased consistency across the school. Step-by-step, goals are being reached and staff are confident that progress will be maintained. The school is now well-placed to secure further improvement.
- Improved tracking of pupils' performance ensures increased accountability among staff and provides a sharp focus on the achievements of different groups of pupils. As yet, success is more obvious in Years 5 and 6. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, effective leadership ensures that individual children's progress is tracked regularly and well-targeted support given.
- Teaching is carefully monitored, and training and performance management is linked to identified priorities. Although shortcomings in teaching remain, the appointment of new staff and implementation of new strategies is starting to reap benefits.
- The local authority supports the school well in a successful partnership with a teaching school. This has contributed to teachers' continuing professional development and has led to improvements in teaching through the sharing of good and outstanding practice. However, these developments are in their infancy, the full impact is not yet being seen in teaching.
- Parents and the local community have become increasingly involved in the life of the school. The weekly luncheon clubs, swimming sessions and drop-ins have proved to be very popular.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced although, as yet, writing is not fully promoted across all subjects. An extensive range of enrichment activities such as drama, sport and art, and visits and visitors bring learning to life. These experiences also contribute to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, although many members are relatively new
 - is starting to be more challenging as governors become more accustomed to their roles
 - is pivotal to decision making on how funding should be spent.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	133711
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	403836

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Coombe
Headteacher	Tricia O'Donnell
Date of previous school inspection	31 January 2011
Telephone number	0161 770 5400
Fax number	0161 624 7350
Email address	head@clarksfield.oldham.sch.uk

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