INSPECTION REPORT

MARKLAND HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Markland Hill, Bolton

LEA area: Bolton

Unique reference number: 105159

Headteacher: Mrs P Beddows

Reporting inspector: Mr I Nelson 2220

Dates of inspection: 19th - 20th February 2002

Inspection number: 197428

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Markland Hill

Bolton

Postcode: BL1 5EJ

Telephone number: 01204 841574

Fax number: 01204 840063

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr G A Fairhurst

Date of previous inspection: September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members				
2220	lan Nelson	Registered inspector		
19697	Janice Moorhouse	Lay inspector		
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The inspection contractor was:

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school How good the school is What the school does well What could be improved How the school has improved since its last inspection Standards Pupils' attitudes and values Teaching and learning Other aspects of the school How well the school is led and managed Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL	10
WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED	13
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	14

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Number on roll

Pupils entitled to free school meals

Pupils with English as an additional language

Pupils on the register of special educational needs

274 (Average for primary schools)

1% (Well below average)

0.3% (Below average)

9% (Well below average)

This is an average sized primary school for pupils aged four to eleven. It serves an area of private housing on the outskirts of Bolton and has few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. Around ten pupils leave each year at Year 2 and 3 to take up places in private schools. The school has been without a deputy head for around a year. Children enter school with attainment above average for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. The very good leadership of the headteacher, governors and subject coordinators ensures consistently high quality teaching throughout the school so that pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Effective management of all aspects of the school leads to it providing very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good leadership creates a very positive and caring atmosphere where everyone expects to work hard and achieve the best they can.
- Consistently very good teaching is based on a rich and well balanced variety of learning experiences and is informed by very good assessment procedures.
- Pupils achieve consistently high standards of work and behaviour.

What could be improved

There are no significant areas for improvement.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997. The key issues were to improve assessment, implement strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and extend the work of the governing body. The school has tackled all these issues very successfully so that procedures for assessment and for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are now very good and governors take a more strategic long-term view of school developments. While tackling the key issues from the previous report the school has also maintained its high standards, improved facilities for information and communication technology (ICT), put in place systems to support the most able Year 6 pupils so that they can tackle level 6 maths papers in the national tests, and established effective performance management policies and practices. Overall, therefore, improvement since the last inspection has been very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

	Compared with					
Performance in:		similar schools				
	1999	2000	2001	2001		
English	Α	A*	A*	Α		
Mathematics	Α	A*	Α	Α		
Science	В	А	В	С		

Кеу	
very high well above average above average average below average well below average	A* A B C D E

The table shows that the school has consistently achieved high standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds over recent years. In last year's tests for eleven-year-olds standards were very high in English (in the top 5% of all schools), well above average in mathematics and above average in science. When compared to similar schools standards were well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. In the national tests for seven-year-olds standards were very high in reading and mathematics (in the top 5% of all schools) and well above average in writing. When compared to similar schools standards were well above average in all three areas. Standards have been rising as fast as standards nationally so that the school has not just maintained high standards but continued to improve them over the years. The school has shown its commitment to continuous improvement by setting even higher targets for 2002. Pupils achieve high standards, particularly in English and mathematics, because they receive good support and have clear targets to achieve. In mathematics some of the most able pupils are receiving extra support to help them attain level 6 in the national tests for eleven-year-olds and this is two levels above that expected of their age. In English pupils show very good skills in speaking and listening when even the youngest children engage adults in interesting conversations. By Year 6 they are well able to debate and discuss at quite a sophisticated level.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils have excellent attitudes to their work. They know they are in school to work hard and do the best they can and they are full of enthusiasm for the tasks the teachers set them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in lessons and around the school. There was no evidence whatsoever of any bullying and pupils say that there is none.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Older pupils have a range of duties to perform to help the school run smoothly and carry out their responsibilities diligently. The younger ones know that they can rely on the older ones to help and support them during lunch and break times.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are well above average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in: Reception		Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6	
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good	

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Overall teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The teaching of literacy and numeracy are very good so that pupils learn effectively and achieve high standards. Teachers place a strong emphasis on basic skills so that pupils learn their multiplication tables and number facts and recall them quickly and accurately. They calculate number problems in their heads with confidence because teachers build into their lessons good opportunities that challenge them to do so. In literacy, pupils learn the rules of English grammar, the skills they need to read increasingly effectively and how to write interestingly in a range of styles. Teachers tell pupils clearly what they will be learning in lessons and what they need to do to improve and move up to a higher level of attainment. Pupils know what their targets are and what they have to do to achieve them. Teachers support those with special educational needs effectively, so that they achieve well, and challenge the most able to push them on to more difficult and demanding tasks. Lessons are interesting and well paced so that they hold pupils' attention and ensure they do not get the chance to be bored. The school makes good use of outside experts like the dental nurse who explained the importance of cleaning teeth properly and the effects of diet. Imaginative teaching encourages pupils to apply skills learned in one subject to work in others, as when they record findings in science in graph form or use stories of Harry Potter from literacy to produce a spectacular performance in assembly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a rich, well-balanced and varied range of lessons for pupils covering all subjects. It provides a very good range of after-school clubs and activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school has very effective systems for assessing pupils' progress and for setting targets for them to achieve. It provides good levels of support for pupils with special educational needs so that they achieve well.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. There is a good focus on music, art and dance, and pupils have time to reflect, to consider feelings and to think about and discuss moral and social issues.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has created a very caring environment where pupils feel safe and secure, and comment on how caring the teachers are. It has developed very good procedures for assessment in all subjects, carefully balancing formal testing with more day-to-day evaluation by teachers in lessons.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and manage- ment by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The head, governors and subject co-ordinators provide very effective leadership. They have a clear view of the future for the school and how to maintain and build upon the high standards they already achieve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors know their school and their duties towards it very well and work hard for the benefit of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has embraced performance management with enthusiasm and has clear structures for checking how well it is doing and what it needs to do to carry on improving.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes very effective use of the resources at its disposal and ensures that grants for specific purposes, like those for pupils with special needs, are correctly used.

The head and the governors know they have to get the best they can from the funding they have by challenging the need for the spending in the first place, consulting on spending decisions, seeking competitive prices and comparing the school's performance with other schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved		
The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.	Homework. Some parents think there is too much and others think there is not enough.		
Teaching is good.	Some parents think there are not enough		
The school is well led and managed.	after-school clubs and activities.		
Behaviour in school is good.			

The inspectors wholeheartedly agree with what the parents like about the school. Teaching is very good, behaviour is excellent, leadership is very good and the school does expect everyone to work hard and achieve their best. The inspectors disagree with the parents who think there are not enough after-school clubs and activities. There is a good range of such opportunities and the children themselves say they are spoiled for choice. The school provides a good range of homework and is open enough for those with specific concerns to talk to teachers and resolve issues together.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Very good leadership creates a very positive and caring atmosphere where everyone expects to work hard and achieve the best they can.

- The head provides very good leadership. She has a very clear vision for the school and shares this effectively with staff, governors, parents and pupils. The parents consider the school to be well led and managed. The head sets the tone of the school with her expectation that everyone will work hard and achieve their best. Consequently all staff share her vision and those who lead various subjects do so very well. They have very clear views about how their subjects should develop and what they need to do to continue to build upon the high standards the school achieves. Governors too have a very clear view of the way forward for the school. They have a very clear understanding of how well the school is doing compared with all schools and with similar schools and they have a clear understanding of its strengths. The school has few weaknesses but the head, staff and governors show a strong commitment to continuous improvement and plan to build upon current successes. Consequently the school development plan is a comprehensive document with much to commend it. It would be even better if it were slimmed down with fewer targets and clearer priorities more focused on maintaining current standards, improving standards or increasing efficiency.
- 2 The head, staff and governors have created a school with care at its core. As a Year 1 pupil put it during a conversation over lunch one day, "The best thing about this school is the teachers because they are very, very caring and look after you". Staff know their pupils very well. They know what they are capable of and ensure that they all have the chance to achieve the best they can within a very stimulating and supportive structure. Caring does not mean just being concerned for their physical well-being, however. It also extends to demanding that pupils work hard, take their share of responsibility for their own development and play an active part in establishing and maintaining the caring community in which they can grow and develop academically, physically, socially and spiritually. That the school is very successful in this is illustrated in conversations with pupils and parents. For example a group of Year 6 pupils, in discussing the books they were reading, considered whether the pedlar in the story could really be 'care free'. One pupil thought that having no cares would also mean having no soul. The 'Harry Potter' assembly exemplified the high standards expected of pupils. The quality of the school orchestra is testament to the commitment to develop skills far beyond those required to do well in the national tests. A parent writes, "The school atmosphere is always one of happy children working at their best An excellent place to learn and mature". Because the teachers know their pupils so well they set demanding targets for them to achieve. There are no soft options, only high expectations. In turn the teachers expect to have challenging targets themselves and through performance management systems to be continually looking to improve their own work. They have a clear understanding of the link between their targets and whole school improvement.
- The clarity of vision and strength of leadership leads to a shared pride in the school and its achievements. Pupils enjoy telling visitors about their work and how good the school is. One very young child for example proudly told the others on his table at lunch one day, "This is an inspector and he's going to the White House to tell President Blair about our school". Another explained that she would be leaving at Year 3 to go to a private school even though she did not really want to because "this is a good school". Staff share this sense of achievement and enjoy being part of a successful team. The premises officer, for example, takes a full and active role in the life of the school, undertaking work far beyond the normal call of duty and using his skills to create extra storage spaces. The administrative staff play a

significant role in the effective day-to-day management of the school. Governors have assigned subjects and liaise with individual teachers alongside their other responsibilities. They have regular meetings with staff and keep themselves updated. This strong team feeling arises directly from the very effective leadership of the head who demands, and gets, the best from all those associated with the school.

Consistently good teaching is based on a rich and well balanced variety of learning experiences and informed by very good assessment procedures.

- 4 Teaching is very good throughout the school. In half the lessons seen during the inspection teaching was very good and two lessons were judged excellent. The rest were judged good except for one which was satisfactory. This consistently high quality teaching is based upon a rich and well balanced curriculum which has a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy but also includes all other subjects. Music is a strong feature of the school, for example, with a large and talented orchestra practising together at the end of the school day. Drama and dance also feature strongly and came into their own in a spectacular performance of the Harry Potter story during assembly. This performance enthralled the watching pupils and allowed the Year 4 and 5 pupils who performed it to excel at dance, choral speaking and acting. The pupils talked excitedly about the range of work they do. including studying art and music from Europe and from other cultures, of using computers and the Internet as well as library books to seek information and of the trips they enjoy to places of interest including the theatre. The school provides a very good variety of afterschool clubs and activities and the pupils thought they were spoiled for choice by the range on offer.
- Also underpinning the very good teaching is the very good range of assessment systems covering all subjects. Through a combination of formal testing, analysing pupils' work and ongoing evaluations of their work in lessons teachers have a very clear idea of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve their work. These assessment procedures enable teachers to set rigorous and very specific targets for pupils. They tell pupils clearly what they need to do to move up through the levels and achieve higher standards and in lessons they provide effective guidance on how work should be improved. As a consequence pupils know what is expected of them and strive to attain their targets. For example in a Year 1 and 2 class targets included "I will make sure my writing has more than one idea" and "I will make sure my ideas follow one another in a sequence that makes sense".
- Teachers plan their lessons well. They tell pupils what they will learn during a lesson and structure lessons so that all pupils get the support they need to do well and achieve success. They use learning support assistants and parent helpers effectively so that pupils with special needs receive adequate support to complete tasks. In mixed age classes the teachers take care to make sure all pupils are suitably challenged by the work they are given. For example in a class of Year 1 and 2 pupils the teacher generally directed harder questions to the older pupils but was aware of which younger ones would cope and made a point of including them. Consequently a Year 1 pupil enjoyed counting in 5s backwards from 50 in front of the class. Teachers expect pupils to achieve high standards. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson the text in use was by H. G. Wells and the pupils thoroughly enjoyed it. They discussed the way Wells uses language to create an atmosphere and build up tension. They read with understanding and referred to the text to illustrate their views and ideas. They read beyond the words, inferring and deducing meaning from the author's use of language.
- 7 Teachers make effective use of outside expertise as in the lesson on dental hygiene when the dental nurse explained the importance of cleaning teeth and the effects of diet on

pupils' health. Pupils listened very well to what she had to say and learned why chocolate is a better option than a packet of mints if they want to eat sweets. Teachers build in to lessons good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. For example in a Year 5 science lesson pupils were encouraged to tell their partners what they already know about the planets and to share some of this knowledge with the rest of the class. In a poetry lesson with a group of Year 6 pupils the teacher encouraged them to discuss three poems on the same theme and pick out what they liked or disliked about each. As a consequence pupils are very articulate and converse easily with adults and each other at levels far beyond those expected of their ages.

The youngest children receive some excellent teaching. The reception classroom is structured to enable the children to work towards the Early Learning Goals, (the standards most children are expected to reach by the time they start Year 1), through a well balanced combination of teacher directed and child chosen activities. Tasks are presented imaginatively so that they hold children's attention and ensure high levels of concentration. Although working towards the Early Learning Goals the teaching also prepares children effectively for the literacy and numeracy format they will encounter in Year 1. Sensitive and comprehensive support for lower attaining children ensures that they achieve very well and keep up with the rest of the class as in the whole class session of a numeracy lesson for example. The newly qualified teacher who shares the reception class with the lead reception class teacher is assured of an excellent role model as she grows in confidence with her teaching.

Pupils achieve consistently high standards of work and behaviour.

- 9 Pupils attain high standards in the national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds. Over the last four years standards in the tests for seven-year-olds have been consistently very high in reading and writing, usually in the top five per cent of all schools, and well above average in mathematics. When compared to similar schools the results of the 2001 tests show Markland Hill to be well above average. In the tests for eleven-year-olds a similar picture emerges of consistently high performance. In English and mathematics, standards are consistently well above average, and in science they are above average. In the tests in 2001 the school was in the top five per cent of all schools for standards in English and in 2000 achieved these levels in both English and mathematics. When compared with schools with similar pupils standards in the tests at eleven are well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. One of the reasons for the school achieving such good results is the number of pupils who gain the higher than expected levels at seven and at eleven. Overall pupils enter school with above average attainment and the school builds effectively upon this good start so that by the time they leave they attain well above average standards having made good progress throughout the school.
- Pupils enter school with positive attitudes and a clear understanding of what is expected of them in terms of hard work and good behaviour. The school builds upon this positive start and throughout the school there is a clear expectation that pupils will be polite, well mannered and settle quickly to tasks. Consequently behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils move around the school quietly and in an orderly way. Older pupils expect to take some responsibility for the welfare and care of younger ones and the youngest children know that they can rely upon the older ones to look after them at lunch and break times. Consequently older pupils encourage younger ones to eat their lunch and tidy away sensibly and set an excellent example for them to follow. The adults in school also encourage these high standards through their own example. Lunchtime supervisors, for example, are quietly efficient, and because they treat the pupils so well they gain their respect in return. This mutual respect contributes greatly to the peaceful and harmonious lunch times.

In lessons pupils are expected to settle quickly to work, to listen to instructions, to take an active part in lessons and to treat each other with respect. Consequently lessons start quickly and are well paced so that time is well used on learning rather than establishing discipline, which is taken for granted. Because of these high expectations pupils concentrate well, share equipment and materials and work hard. For example in a reception class lesson children happily shared beads as they made patterns on strings and they talked easily about what they were doing. The parents consider standards of work and behaviour to be very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

12 There are no significant areas for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	10	1	0	0	0
Percentage	8	48	40	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		274
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		26

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	21	19	40

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Boys	21	21	21
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	39	39	40
Percentage of pupils	School	98 (95)	98 (93)	100 (93)
at NC level 2 or above	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	21	21	21
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	40	40	40
Percentage of pupils	School	100 (95)	100 (95)	100 (95)
at NC level 2 or above	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	17	28	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	13	15	17
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	28	25	28
	Total	41	40	45
Percentage of pupils	School	91 (100)	89 (100)	100 (100)
at NC level 4 or above	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Boys	13	15	17
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Girls	28	25	28
	Total	41	40	45
Percentage of pupils	School	91 (94)	89 (100)	100 (100)
at NC level 4 or above	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black - Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	6
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	254
Any other minority ethnic group	9

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	28
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black - Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001	
	£	
Total income	551125	
Total expenditure	561002	
Expenditure per pupil	2031	
Balance brought forward from previous year	625	
Balance carried forward to next year	- 9251	

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	274
Number of questionnaires returned	116

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	30	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	74	24	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	34	15	3	1
The teaching is good.	70	29	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	47	10	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	28	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	87	13	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	34	3	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	83	16	0	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	41	12	1	8