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Inspection report

# Ladybarn Primary School

Better  
education  
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Unique Reference Number 105423  
LEA Manchester

Inspection number 269342  
Inspection dates 20 - 21 October 2004  
Reporting inspector Clive Kempton HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the school Inspectors Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act.

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Type of School	Primary	School address	Briarfield Road
School category	Community		Withington
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Manchester M20 4SR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 445 4898
Number on roll	302	Fax number	0161 448 2652
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Bill Simpson
Date of previous inspection	January 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Vyas

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Age group  
3 - 11

Published  
November 2004

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## Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Ladybarn Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one independent lay inspector.

## Description of the school

Ladybarn School is an average sized primary school in Manchester. Forty pupils attend its nursery and more than half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. When children are admitted to the nursery, many do not have the skills or knowledge typical of three and four year olds. An increasing proportion enter the nursery with language difficulties and some have little English. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. Nearly one fifth of pupils entered or left in the last academic year other than at the normal admission time. The school has attained an Achievement Award in 2003, Investors in People status and a Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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## Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school with some very good features where pupils make good progress. The central mission statement of the school is clear and permeates all aspects of its work. Teaching and learning are good across the school and particularly strong from the nursery through to year two.

The school is very well led at all levels. Parents' and pupils' views are regularly sought and plans are adapted to meet the changing needs of the school. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has a history of sustained improvement. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school supports all children well, taking account of their individual needs. The school provides a good range of work that embraces the wide mix of cultures present in the local community. It offers good value for money.

**Grade: 2**

### Improvement since the last inspection

There has been significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards have risen, the quality of teaching is consistently better, and all the issues raised in the last report have been addressed successfully. This overall improvement has been achieved against a backdrop of a changing intake and more pupils needing extra help when they first start school.

**Grade: 1**

### Capacity to improve

The school has an accurate picture of its own performance. It has realistic strategies for further development and a good track record in successfully tackling weaknesses. The strength of the senior management team, and the vision and drive shown by the headteacher provide a strong indication that the school is very well placed to make further significant progress.

**Grade: 1**

### What the school should do to improve further

In order to build on its strengths and improve standards further, the school should:

- improve continuity and progression of learning in all foundation subjects
- improve the consistency, and the pupils' understanding, of marking
- continue to improve provision for the most able pupils.

## Achievement and standards

Children have very low standards in many areas of learning when they start in the nursery, with some having little or no English and very limited social skills. The exciting and vibrant teaching programme ensures children make very good progress and get off to a marvellous start. The high quality provision for these pupils ensures that progress is very strong and consistent for all. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics and well above average when compared with similar schools. Older pupils make good progress and reach standards close to national averages and better than those found in similar schools. Standards have improved since the last inspection despite increasing numbers of pupils joining classes of older pupils at various times during the year. These pupils quickly embrace the ethos of the school and make good progress.

Improvements in recent years have been very substantial. The concerted drive for improvement in standards for older pupils has produced positive outcomes for many, particularly boys. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and do as well as they can.

In other subjects standards, although satisfactory, are not always as high as they could be, and are not as high as in English and mathematics.

Personal development is very good. Pupils behave very well, enjoy their lessons and have a mature attitude to their work. The school has worked very hard to improve pupil attendance over the last few years and it has now risen and meets the national average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Many pupils develop a strong sense of community through the responsibilities they are given, such as: the school council; the playground squad; and in organising school assemblies. The development of pupils' self esteem permeates the life of the school and much is done to give them a sense of self-worth. For example, 'Heart of the Week', is an opportunity for pupils in any class to nominate a peer for a kindness award presented in assembly.

### **Grade: 2**

## Quality of provision

Teaching is good overall with some very good, and often excellent, teaching of younger pupils. Relationships throughout the school are very good. Adults know the pupils very well and plan work carefully to meet their needs. Pupils' behaviour is managed skilfully by staff and this ensures that they listen attentively and concentrate hard. Pupils move calmly and sensibly around the school and always greet visitors with a warm, friendly smile.

The better teaching is lively and engaging. There is a strong emphasis on developing language skills with the younger children and the activities stimulate and capture their imagination. For example, writing stories about 'What I want to be'. Work across the school is generally well matched to pupils' needs. Those needing extra help are taught well and make good progress. Although the teaching of basic English and mathematics skills is strong, more needs to be done to provide challenge for the most able pupils and to improve the teaching of skills in other subjects too.

The procedures for checking how well pupils are doing are robust. Teachers regularly and systematically assess how much pupils have learned. Whilst there are examples of marking that help pupils to improve, the practice is inconsistent across the school and significant numbers of pupils do not know what they need to do to improve their work.

Overall, the pupils do a broad range of interesting work. Teachers work very well together to plan stimulating experiences. Classrooms are vibrant places where pupils want to be. Further enriching opportunities are provided such as the literacy-based activity day (LINKS) observed during the inspection. These opportunities contribute strongly to pupils' cultural and spiritual development. The school successfully provides a wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities. It has been very effective in securing funding to finance innovative out-of-hours projects which are benefiting the pupils, particularly those in need of most assistance because of their circumstances.

The care and welfare of pupils is of the utmost importance to all adults and is very good overall. The school has a strong commitment to knowing and supporting all pupils. The result is that pupils develop a confidence that is evident throughout the school. The massage therapist, employed two days a week, is an example of an innovation that benefits not only identified pupils but also their parents. The school promotes a healthy lifestyle with such initiatives as the National Fruit Scheme and has made changes to the school meals to take account of parents concerns about nutrition.

**Grade: 2**

## Leadership and management

The overall quality of leadership and management is very good. The headteacher through careful checking, has an acute understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need further development. She is a very good leader and has a clear vision that is well communicated to staff at all levels. This high quality leadership has enabled the school to cope well with significant staffing changes, especially at Key Stage 2. Temporary appointments at a senior level have made a clear impact and have improved the quality of management. Everyone, including parents, pupils and governors feel involved and valued in the decision making process. There is a determination to continually improve. A good example is the way that pupil data is carefully analysed so that pupils in difficult circumstances receive good timely support and have equal opportunities to succeed.

External funding, such as the Children's Fund, is used well to provide additional resources and staffing. The quiet room for example, a multi-sensory environment for identified pupils, is very

effective in calming pupils and developing their confidence and self-esteem. This facility is being extended to parents and staff. Other whole-school initiatives led by the senior leadership team, such as the involvement with the University of the First Age, is having a positive impact on teaching and learning styles, and the general ethos of the school. All staff have adapted their teaching styles to meet the needs of all learners, especially the boys.

The school improvement plan is detailed, understood by everyone and provides a good basis for further improvement. Teaching resources are deployed efficiently in areas of need especially in Key Stage 1 where overall, pupils make quicker progress. There is a constant drive by the management of the school to overcome the deficiencies in accommodation in order to develop stimulating learning environments. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and ensure that the school meets legal requirements.

**Grade: 1**

Dear Ladybarn Primary School

**Ladybarn Primary School, Withington, Manchester**

Thank you for letting us come and visit your school. We enjoyed watching you learn. We liked talking to you about your work, speaking to your teachers and coming into your assembly.

**What we liked most about your school:**

- You welcomed us warmly and greeted us with a friendly smile
- You are all very kind and polite to each other in the classroom and when you are playing outside
- You work very hard for your teachers and they do their best to help you learn
- Your headteacher runs the school very well. She listens to what you all think could make it better and works hard to make the changes happen
- Those of you who find work hard are getting the right sort of help
- The teachers who run your school know what it does well and what it needs to do to get even better
- Your parents and carers are right in thinking you go to a good school

**What we have asked your school to do now:**

- Give you even more exciting work to do in subjects like art, history, geography, and dance
- Make sure that all of you understand the comments your teacher has written in your books and use them to improve your work
- Give harder challenges to those of you who have special talents

Yours sincerely,

The HMI Inspection team

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