



# Alma Park Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105389  
**LEA** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 277348  
**Inspection dates** 7 June 2006 to 8 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Delia Hiscock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Errwood Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Levenshulme
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M19 2PF
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2248789
<b>Number on roll</b>	457	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2252776
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Axel Bottenberg
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	15 January 2001	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs P Treanor

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This very popular large school situated in Levenshulme, Manchester, serves an urban population, amongst which there are some features of economic hardship. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including many with complex or severe needs, is high. The majority of pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, almost two thirds of whom are learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils on roll has increased by a quarter in the last five years. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school in different year groups is very high: some are new to the United Kingdom. The school has gained a Gold Award for Healthy Schools and Inclusion.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent quality of education and exceptionally good value for money. Because the school's view of its work is modest when comparing itself to other schools, the inspection judgement is higher than that of the school's. The exciting vision of the headteacher, combined with excellent leadership and management, and dedication to the school community, has placed it in a really strong position for the future. Leadership provides very positive role models for both staff and pupils. Staff work closely together and the school's thoroughly robust systems, shared approaches, values and high aspirations mean that pupils achieve exceptionally well. This is because the school is highly skilled in meeting the many, sometimes complex needs of its pupils, and improving provision to do so. Pupils' personal development and the care, guidance and support they receive, are impressive. Every pupil in this school knows that they matter, whatever their talents, ability, difficulties, culture, faith or heritage.

The quality of the Foundation Stage has improved hugely since the last inspection, so children have, from well below average levels of development, an outstanding start on their learning journey. To continue their progress smoothly, additional adult support is planned for pupils in Year 1 to enable staff to provide even more practical activities so that pupils can continue to learn independently. All staff have opportunities to evaluate lessons and pupils' work. They thrive on the insights this brings and, in turn, this has raised the quality of teaching and learning and improved the curriculum: both are outstanding. Assessment now features some exciting ways for pupils to see what they have learned and activities are innovative and stimulating. These features result in most pupils attaining broadly average levels by the end of Year 6. Those who enter the school from abroad in the late junior years also make very good progress but are, obviously, less likely to meet national standards. Parents, carers and pupils are hugely enthusiastic about their school. As one pupil said, 'It's almost perfect. I can't think of anything that could improve it.'

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more learning support for the transition between Reception and Year 1.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

The vast majority of pupils achieve exceptionally well, including those with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils of minority ethnic heritage, and those learning to speak English. Children in Nursery and Reception make really good progress from well below expected levels of development when they start and achieve many of the expected skills by the end of their Reception year, including those pupils with little or no English.

Although attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average, this still represents very good achievement for the cohorts of pupils, 50% of whom have no English or are

at the very early stages of learning English on entry. Pupils' work shows that their acquisition of basic skills is well developed, especially in writing and mathematics.

Key Stage 2 results in national tests in 2005 were not as high as the previously high standards and excellent achievement shown in 2003 and 2004. Although well above average in science, results were well below average in English and mathematics. However, 2005 did not represent an accurate picture of pupils' attainment overall because this cohort saw an influx of pupils with complex learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English, which depressed the results. A similar pattern is to be seen in the current Year 6. However, those Year 6 pupils who have been in the school throughout most of Key Stage 2 are predicted to attain expected levels and their work demonstrates excellent achievement. The progress pupils make in reading, writing, mathematics and science is exceptional from the time they enter school. This is because pupils' learning needs are quickly assessed and teaching provision is highly tuned to meet their needs. Consequently, pupils make rapid headway towards and meet challenging targets.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and better than the school believes. Attendance is satisfactory, having improved substantially in recent years. Excellent strategies, including some initiated by the school council, have much improved punctuality and pupils really enjoy coming to school. They are extremely keen to learn. Behaviour is outstanding thanks to the wonderful relationships created between pupils and staff and between pupils themselves. Pupils learn to treat each other with respect and this is especially noticeable when new pupils join the school and are helped to settle in immediately by their peers. Bullying incidents are very rare. The 'anti bullying club' is a very effective pupil support system. Pupils feel very comfortable at school and declare, 'All our teachers make an effort to get to know you around the school.' The school council system ensures that all pupils have a role to play in the development of the school. As well as making various suggestions to improve the physical environment, they have also helped to make school dinners even healthier. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles. Playground equipment boxes are used extremely well and playtimes are a positive experience for them. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is extremely good. The school has effective reward systems which, along with the excellent relationships, contribute to their outstanding attitudes and thoughtfulness towards others.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers' commitment to providing the best for every pupil is seen in the creative way they plan lessons and their excellent

use of assessment to challenge pupils' varying needs and abilities. This challenge is also taken beyond lesson time, for example, into lunchtimes when wheelchair dance sessions for disabled pupils take place. This exemplifies the inclusiveness of the school's teaching and learning philosophy. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure and this confidence encourages them to risk new methods and ideas to stimulate learning. It often results in outstanding lessons. For example, in a French lesson, the teacher's expertise and the variety of exciting activities to involve pupils in conversation resulted in a lively and highly enjoyable lesson. Relationships with pupils are excellent because every one of them feels valued; in return they show an exceptional eagerness for learning and respond very well to helpful marking of their work. Provision for pupils who learn English as an additional language is outstanding. All teachers adapt the pace of teaching to pupils' understanding and question skilfully to encourage children to speak. High quality teaching, supported fully by thorough assessment, ensures that expectations are frequently exceeded. Teaching assistants work effectively alongside teachers and are equally sensitive to the particular needs of pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. Statutory requirements are exceeded because of the inclusion of French. Teachers plan creatively so that basic skills are adapted to pupils' needs and linked across subjects to make learning relevant and reflective. There are excellent opportunities for pupils to be responsible for their own learning. Learning sign language means that many with little spoken English, as well as those who are hearing impaired, readily check each other's work. The curriculum caters exceptionally well for pupils' diverse range of needs and features plenty of activities that are practical in nature. These help pupils to tackle key ideas, for example, in science. The importance of staying safe and adopting a healthy lifestyle is promoted extremely well. Pupils are actively involved in health and environmental projects which emphasise personal safety and well-being through physical exercise, sensible eating habits, and healthy relationships. The range and quality of activities to enrich learning through first-hand experiences are outstanding and there are many opportunities for pupils to foster skills and interests in clubs after school. A notable inclusion is the on-line mathematics link with a university in America.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The quality of the care, guidance and support pupils receive is of the highest quality. Pupils feel cared for and they readily describe how teachers help them to improve their work. Parents also appreciate the care their children receive. One parent summed this up succinctly by writing, 'The determination of the school leadership to find appropriate ways of addressing her needs has been crucial in allowing her to remain and progress in mainstream schooling.' This view was reflected in the vast majority of responses from parents. The academic and personal development of all pupils is extremely well tracked and used very well by teachers and support assistants in the classrooms.

Excellent links with outside agencies ensure that all pupils' needs are catered for. Very effective child protection and health and safety systems are in place to ensure pupils' well-being is paramount. Pupils really appreciate the commitment of the staff; for example, in the variety of school clubs that are offered and also with support they receive in the classroom: 'Our teachers make lessons interesting and explain things brilliantly.'

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. This is higher than the school's own modest view because the school thinks that outstanding can only apply to schools which cannot improve further. The forward thinking and strength of leadership of the headteacher, complemented by the work of the deputy headteacher has brought together the cultures, faiths and aspirations of the whole school community. The direction in which they lead the school with the commitment to the well-being of all, has created an impressive climate for learning. Excellent leadership ensures staff and pupils are determined to do their best. The headteacher's vision for the school places personal development at its core to enable pupils to gain robust skills for life. To achieve this, resources are used creatively, expectations are high, and really effective role models are part and parcel of the rich range of experiences that includes community learning. To put the vision into practice, the school plans very effectively and systematically, but flexibly, to adapt to need. This ensures that most pupils make rapid progress and, in some instances, against the odds. Astute monitoring, colleague support, staff development and extensive work with parents, carers and the community, are key features that have accelerated the progress of pupils. Excellent leadership in the Foundation Stage is also paying dividends in Key Stage 1 as children move on in their 'learning journey'. Additional support staff are needed to continue this development into Year 1 so that pupils have even more practical experiences to help them learn independently. Leaders at all levels are dynamic and professional. They support and develop other staff, including support staff, to improve all the time. Consequently, the school knows how well it is doing but is keen to improve even further. Parents, carers, and pupils think very highly of their school. Governance is diligent and effective.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you for being so kind and helpful during the time we spent with you. This letter is to tell you what we think about your school. We would like you to share it with all the pupils you represent.

We think you are very lucky to be in such a really good school. We liked the way that you all get on so well together. We can see that you welcome children who join from other schools and other places in the world. It is great to see how you help them to settle. We think that you do really well in your work. We like the way you all behave so well and work so hard in lessons. We really liked the way that you check to see what you have learned and work out if you need some more help. That's super!

All the teachers and classroom staff work hard to make lessons just right for you. We think that this is why you learn so quickly, especially when some of you are still learning to speak English; when some of you do not find learning easy and need a bit of help. We think it would be super if the pupils in Year 1 had an extra adult to help them get even more out of the exciting activities on offer.

We could see also that you have learned such a lot about how to keep safe and healthy, and to care about others. Keep up your good work! We wish you good luck for the future.