



# Plymouth Grove Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105443  
**LEA** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 277357  
**Inspection dates** 21 June 2006 to 22 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Arthur Markham CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Plymouth Grove West
<b>School category</b>	Community		Chorlton-on-Medlock
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Manchester, Lancashire M13 0AQ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2731453
<b>Number on roll</b>	339	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2743126
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr D Leaver
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 June 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr P Cantillon

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 21 June 2006 - 22 June 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 277357
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves a deprived inner city area in Manchester. More than half of the pupils claim free school meals. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is very high and a large number are in the early stages of learning English. On entry to the Nursery many children have low level skills. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Pupil mobility is above average in some year groups. The school has Healthy School status and has achieved the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school that gives good value for money. The school judges itself this way and inspectors agree. Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children make good progress from their low attainment on entry although standards are still low by the time they enter Year 1. By the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics and science are close to the national average, but below average in English. However, they compare very well with those in similar schools. Pupils are cared for well and the school works very well with outside agencies to support vulnerable children. Pupils' personal development is good. They have positive attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children, one saying, 'I think it is a fantastic school and a shining example of how a good primary school is run.'

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by the deputy headteacher. The staff share their determined commitment to raising standards. Self evaluation procedures are good, although the monitoring roles of subject coordinators are not fully developed. The school has accurately identified the need to raise standards in English, particularly writing, but more work still needs to be done. Pupils' progress is closely monitored and target-setting arrangements have been developed, although they are not implemented consistently across the school. Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly, they make limited use of developmental comments to help pupils understand how to improve.

Improvement since the last inspection has been good and the school is well placed to improve in the future.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to develop their writing skills across the curriculum in order to raise standards in English.
- Develop the monitoring roles of subject coordinators.
- Develop a consistent approach to the setting of short term targets for pupils across the school and ensure that the marking of pupils' work helps them understand how to improve.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement is good. Standards are below national averages but compare well with similar schools. The large number of pupils at the early stages of learning English, and the increasing rate of pupil mobility, have an adverse impact on standards. On entry to the Nursery most children have low level skills. They make a good start to their learning in the Foundation Stage to reach standards that are low but closer to expectations. In Years 1 and 2, effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress

and achieve standards that are generally below those expected nationally. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make very good progress to reach standards in mathematics and science that are close to average, but below average in English. The language difficulties faced by many pupils slows progress in English. However, the emphasis being given to developing pupils' writing skills is beginning to have a positive impact.

The school sets reasonably challenging targets and most pupils achieve them. Close attention is given to meeting the needs of all pupils. The very good level of support given to pupils who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to achieve well. The school has taken positive action to address the relatively lower achievement of boys than girls by providing resources that stimulate their interest. This is having a positive impact on their learning.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school, although attendance is below the national average. The school does all it can to improve attendance, but the taking of extended holidays during term time has a marked impact on attendance levels. Behaviour is good in lessons and on the playground, where the pupils enjoy a good selection of games equipment to use in the large school grounds. Pupils mostly treat each other with respect. They feel confident that there is someone they could go to for help and that the rare incidents of bullying are dealt with speedily. They are pleased that their views are taken into account and that a number of the changes recommended by the school council have been implemented. Initiatives, such as the school dinner competition, are helping pupils to adopt healthier lifestyles. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. Pupils have a good awareness of the needs of others whilst supporting charities such as Water Aid. They learn to work independently and collaboratively and to make considered decisions. These factors satisfactorily help them to prepare for their future economic well-being. Pupils celebrate and value their own and others' cultural heritage. One parent commented that she was very pleased with this and felt that 'the integration of all cultures has had an extremely positive benefit on our three children.'

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers explain activities clearly and challenging questioning ensures that pupils generally make good progress. Relationships are good and pupils say they like their teachers and enjoy their learning. They have positive attitudes and behave well in lessons. Teachers use support staff well to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are catered for effectively. As a result those pupils learning English as an additional language and those having learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well. Good use is made of a variety of

strategies to engage pupils, provide opportunities for speaking and listening, and promote learning. For example, the use of paired talk, 'hot seating' and drama makes learning interesting. Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to use opportunities to highlight links between subjects. However, some aspects of teaching are less well developed. Assessment of pupils' writing is not sufficiently used to further develop independent writing strategies for all groups, and strategies for developing writing across the school are not consistent and cohesive in practice. Although teachers mark pupils' work diligently, not enough use is made of developmental comments to help them understand how to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good. It meets the needs of pupils well and has particular strengths in provision for music, art and drama, but is less effective in developing pupils' writing skills in subjects other than English. Good links with local high schools and the nearby university foster effective curriculum and transition projects at Key Stage 2. All pupils have equal opportunities to take part in all subjects of the curriculum and to learn about a safe and healthy lifestyle through personal, social and health education and physical activities. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and is currently being extended to include parental involvement in reading. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in other subjects. Recently acquired interactive whiteboards add significantly to the quality of learning. The school is very keen to make learning interesting and enjoyable for the pupils and enhances the curriculum by a wide range of visits and visitors. Vibrant displays around the school reflect the wide range of the school's activities and its diverse community.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is good. The academic and personal development of pupils is monitored carefully and information is used effectively to ensure that their needs are provided for well. However, the setting of short-term targets to help them understand how to improve is not consistently applied across the school. The quality of support for pupils learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good and vulnerable pupils are supported well by the two learning mentors. Appropriate procedures are in place to safeguard pupils and there is good liaison with external agencies. Health and safety systems are in place to ensure pupils' well-being is paramount. Parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for at school. They feel happy to voice any concerns because they feel that teachers are approachable: one parent stating, 'We are free to talk to all members of staff on a friendly informal basis.' Good relationships between pupils and staff help to maintain a positive ethos throughout the school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's vision of 'making learning irresistible' is shared by the whole staff with the result that there is a strong commitment to providing a high quality education for the pupils. Close attention is given to equal opportunities and staff cater well for the diverse needs of the pupils who come from a wide range of language backgrounds. Parents are very supportive of the school and value what it offers their children. They feel that pupils are 'recognised for their unique talents and abilities' and are 'valued and given opportunities to develop their strengths'.

There are effective systems in place for evaluating how well the school is doing. However, although some subject coordinators have carried out monitoring and are working effectively in this role, this is not the case in all subjects. The school makes good use of information from monitoring to guide the school improvement plan, which has raising standards at its heart. For example, action was taken to address a dip in standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 in 2005 and inspection evidence shows this has proved successful. Governors have a reasonable understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are supportive of its leadership, but are less effective in challenging the school.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity for further improvement because of the headteacher's determined leadership, and teachers' enthusiasm and commitment.

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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>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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>	2	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	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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**

As you know, three inspectors recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you with your learning. Thank you for being so friendly and talking to the inspectors. We enjoyed being in your exciting school and listening to what you had to say. The things that we particularly liked were:

- the way you all try hard and take a pride in your work
- your very good behaviour and attitudes to school
- the way the teachers work hard to help you learn
- the wide range of interesting activities and visits that make learning more exciting for you
- how well the school is run by the headteacher and staff.

We think you have a good school, but have asked your teachers to improve three things to make your school even better. We want them to:

- help you to improve your writing so that you achieve well in English
- make sure that teachers check up how you are doing in all subjects to help you improve your work
- set you targets to help you understand what you need to learn, and make comments when marking your work that help you to understand how to improve.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. We all hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Plymouth Grove becomes an even better school.