



Littlemoor Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105642
LEA Oldham
Inspection number 277383
Inspection dates 11 January 2006 to 12 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs June Sharpe CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Littlemoor Lane
School category	Community		Oldham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire OL4 2RR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 624 4188
Number on roll	299	Fax number	0161 624 3160
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Miss A Collier
Date of previous inspection	13 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs N Hankey

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school, close to Oldham town centre, has 299 girls and boys on roll. The number of children claiming free school meals is above average. Almost all the children are of white British heritage, although a few children from minority ethnic groups attend. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Since 2003, there has been unsettled leadership, along with several staff changes and absences. The headteacher is on maternity leave, and the school has had a seconded experienced headteacher since October 2005. There are plans for the school to incorporate a Children's Centre from September 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree that this is a satisfactory school with some good features. It gives satisfactory value for money. Satisfactory leadership, management, teaching, learning and a satisfactory curriculum, enable children to make satisfactory progress. Children attend regularly and enjoy coming. The Foundation Stage, particularly the nursery, gives children a good start to their education. Support for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed well, enabling them to make good progress. Children's behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good, and all children work and play together in harmony. Children know little, however, about what they need to do to reach higher levels of work, and this restricts their learning. Otherwise, there is a good standard of care of children in this happy and orderly school.

Owing to a long period of unsettled leadership, staff changes and absences, the school has lacked consistently good educational direction. It has only recently started to turn a corner by identifying key priorities and agreeing plans to raise standards. A seconded experienced headteacher has led the newly formed senior leadership team with determination to put the school's weaknesses right. However, the monitoring and evaluation of performance is not rigorously established. Children's achievement, although satisfactory, is variable. There have been improvements in Year 6 national test results in reading, mathematics and science, but gaps remain in children's writing and numeracy skills. The more capable children could sometimes do better. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and basic numeracy skills across the school, especially for the more capable children, by ensuring consistently good teaching.
- Develop fully the leadership roles of senior staff, particularly by checking that children are achieving challenging targets.
- Press forward quickly with plans to assess children accurately and to involve them more in their own learning and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. When children enter the Foundation Stage, their attainment is below expectations. They make good progress, particularly in the nursery, but few attain all the goals set for children by the end of the reception year. The 2005 Year 2 national assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were below average. Children in Years 1 and 2 are currently achieving satisfactorily. They enter the school with below average attainment; following a good start in the Foundation Stage, progress overall to the end of Year 2 is satisfactory, although there are examples of good progress. Achievement from Year 3 to Year 6, although satisfactory, is variable, with examples of good and improving standards.

Year 6 science national test results in 2005, for example, were a significant improvement from 2004 and above average, and standards in mathematics also improved. Performance in national tests in 2005, however, was let down by English results. Although reading continued an improving trend and results were above average, writing results were poor, and the school did not meet targets for English. However, progress overall is satisfactory. The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for 2006, including higher expectations for the more capable children, who could sometimes do better. Raising standards in writing and challenging the more capable children are, rightly, key priorities for the school. Teachers know that there are gaps in children's understanding of some basic literacy and numeracy skills that prevent them from achieving well. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support, and this helps them to make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school, rightly, thinks that personal development and well-being are good. Children enjoy school and attend regularly. Attendance is improving year on year, and it is now a little above average. Children's behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. This reflects the very good relationships between children and with adults, as well as children's very good attitudes. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children understand how to keep themselves safe and how to live healthy lifestyles. Some older children enjoy looking after younger children and helping to keep the school clean and tidy. Children gain some understanding of the world of work as a result of visitors to the school, but they have few opportunities to contribute to the wider community. They understand the differences between right and wrong and how to work in harmony with people from different ethnic backgrounds. The school council allows children to contribute to making decisions about the life of the school, although they have not yet considered what rewards and punishments there should be. The good personal, social and emotional development of children in the Foundation Stage, especially the nursery, gives them a positive start to their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and not as good as the school thinks. Hardworking and enthusiastic teachers are keen for children to do well. Children benefit greatly from very good relationships with adults and from careful deployment of support staff. As a result, teachers do not have to waste learning time dealing with behavioural problems. Good basic teaching skills, however, are not always reflected in children's learning. This is because children do not know how they need to improve their work. On a day to day basis teachers share with children their expectation of what they will learn but do not always recognise when they are ready to move up to the next level. The school has been slow to respond to national initiatives with regard

to setting learning targets and adjusting teaching to the needs of children of differing ages and abilities in each class. As a result, children's learning has been held back, particularly the more capable children. The seconded experienced headteacher and senior leadership team, however, are making determined and positive efforts to put this right. Teaching in the Foundation Stage, particularly the nursery, is good. Good teaching for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, rather than good as the school has judged. It meets requirements and caters for the needs of all children, including children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Challenge for the more capable children, however, is not always sufficient to enable them to attain higher levels of work. The school, rightly, focuses on teaching literacy and numeracy, although gaps in the teaching of some basic skills limit children's overall achievement. The curriculum is currently being improved to enable children to improve their literacy skills through work in other subjects, such as art and design. The curriculum for information and communication technology is much improved since the previous inspection. In mathematics, standards are improving because of increased opportunities for children to learn to solve problems. Opportunities for children to learn about safety and health are good. Children can choose from a good range of additional activities. As a result of very good support from the local authority music service, musical activities are particularly strong.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Children are well cared for and there are good procedures for health and safety. Consequently, children work safely and are very happy to come to school. Child Protection arrangements are secure, and there are good links with outside support agencies. Children say that they feel safe and free from bullying and discrimination. They trust adults at school and know where to turn for help. Children like the recent initiatives to encourage healthy lifestyles and diets. Parents and carers feel welcome in school and are encouraged to become involved in their children's education. Arrangements for settling new children into school and for transferring to secondary schools are good. Children's personal development is particularly well tracked in the Foundation Stage, but this does not extend throughout the school. Teachers know individual children well, but they do not ensure that children understand how they need to improve in order to reach higher levels of work. This means that provision is satisfactory, rather than the school's judgement of good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school is right to think that leadership and management are satisfactory. There are orderly daily routines and parents and carers think very highly of the school. Relationships are very good and the budget is managed very well. The lack of settled and consistent educational direction in the last few years, however, has resulted in a slow response to an urgent need to improve writing in the school. Although governance is satisfactory, the school does not have robust written plans to tackle weaknesses and to help the senior leadership team to check how well everyone is doing with raising standards. Nevertheless, standards in mathematics and science in Year 6 have improved as a result of action taken. Governors have taken firm action to deal with previous inadequate teaching, but it is taking time for this to impact fully on Year 2 national assessments. The new improvement plan identifies the right priorities, including more consultation with children and their parents and carers. This indicates that the school has started to evaluate its performance more thoroughly, and leaders know what needs to be done. The seconded experienced headteacher gives a strong lead, and has successfully created a senior leadership team with good ideas and determination to take the school forward. Additionally, the school has good support from the local authority, including plans for the seconded experienced headteacher to retain her close involvement until strong leadership is reflected in consistently good teaching and even better test results. The fact that the new senior leadership team have so much to do in order to get the school fully back on track makes capacity to improve satisfactory, rather than good.

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Thank you for being so friendly and for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things you do at school.

What we liked most about your school:

- you like coming to school
- everyone gets along very well together
- your behaviour is very good, and you work hard
- the school keeps you safe and happy
- your parents and carers think that Littlemoor Primary is a good school
- your reading and work in science is very good by the time you leave the school
- you are getting better at solving problems in mathematics.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- help you all to improve your writing and your work in numeracy
- make sure that you know what you need to do to reach higher levels of work
- keep checking that the school is improving quickly enough and that you are all doing as well you can.

We hope that you continue to be a happy school.