



Cavendish Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105403
Local Authority Manchester
Inspection number 287218
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Derek Aitken

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Cavendish Road
School category	Community		West Didsbury
Age range of pupils	3–11		Manchester M20 1JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 2341020
Number on roll (school)	435	Fax number	-
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ms S Reeves
		Headteacher	Mr A Buckler
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006	Inspection number 287218
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is much larger than average. More pupils than is usual join or leave the school between Year 1 and the end of Year 6. Pupils come from a variety of social backgrounds but the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. About half of all pupils are White British; others include pupils of Pakistani and Black Caribbean heritage. A small proportion are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has undergone major changes in staffing at management level. These include the recent appointments of the three members of the senior leadership team who are exercising interim responsibility for the work of the school. It is led by the deputy headteacher in the role of acting headteacher. The school is a resource school for pupils with visual impairments and has a wide range of partnerships, which include educational and performing arts establishments.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. However, its performance in a few respects is inadequate. Before its next Section 5 inspection, Ofsted may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying these weaknesses. The school would receive two to five days notice of such a visit.

Progress is satisfactory rather than good as the school suggests because the rate of progress is uneven in the Foundation Stage to Year 2. Pupils make good progress in Reception to reach just above average standards because teaching is focused on how to move pupils' learning forwards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. This is because in the Nursery there are inconsistencies in teaching and a few lax hygiene procedures. The quality of teaching and learning is more consistent for the older pupils and enables them to make satisfactory progress to reach average standards in Year 6.

Information from assessment is not used well enough to set targets to boost pupils' achievement. While the curriculum has strengths in providing varied enrichment opportunities for pupils, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) across other subjects.

In recent years, standards at the school have been broadly average but they dipped in 2005 in Year 2, largely as a result of weaknesses in boys' writing. Satisfactory measures have been put in place to tackle this but they have not improved results yet. Year 6 pupils have not usually achieved as well in science as in other subjects. Better results in 2006 reflected improved provision in this subject. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. Pupils with visual impairments, and those at an early stage of learning English as an additional language, make good progress because they receive very effective support.

The school achieves satisfactory outcomes for its pupils in their personal development, and there are some good features. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and make good use of opportunities to contribute to the wider community. Their cultural development is enhanced by good provision in music and sport. Attendance has dropped markedly over the last year and is inadequate. While an increasingly mobile population accounts in part for this, school strategies to improve attendance are not working. The school's inclusive ethos enables pupils to feel safe and valued. Supervision arrangements are satisfactory in the main. Academic guidance has weaknesses because targets are not used well enough to spur pupils on.

The satisfactory leadership and management have some strengths, reflected in the positive steps being taken to improve provision. The new senior leaders have earned the confidence of staff and parents through providing a capable steer for the school during a transitional phase. Parents report that they are happy with the standard of education their children receive. Monitoring, evaluation and review throughout the school are at an early stage and, as a consequence, leaders have not yet acquired a really sharp view of school performance. This is reflected in inadequate self-evaluation. The school has been good at establishing productive partnerships which support pupils'

learning and enrich their experiences. The maintenance of standards overall, the ability to set priorities to tackle weaknesses, and the recent implementation of improved management systems indicate satisfactory capacity to improve and satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure evaluation of the work of the school is detailed, and that it identifies precisely and clearly the actions needed to improve standards.
- Improve attendance to bring it at least in line with the national average.
- Improve standards in writing to boost pupils' achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage, Year 1 and 2.
- Make better use of assessment and targets to enable pupils to improve their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. On entry to the Nursery pupils have average skills and knowledge. By the end of the FS they make good progress, achieving just beyond the levels expected Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are average overall. In writing, they are slightly lower at both key stages and for boys in particular at Year 2. Some more able children do not do as well as they could by Year 6 because individual targets are not challenging. Pupils' achievement in science has improved this year following a concerted effort to raise standards in this subject. While all groups of pupils including those with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, very effective support enables pupils with visual impairments to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons, but in less formal situations, such as on corridors, children are sometimes noisy and boisterous. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning, but occasionally boys lack concentration and begin to fidget and become distracted. The school council enables pupils to contribute well to the life of the school. Opportunities to elect their fellows as monitors or playtime buddies help to instil a sense of responsibility for each other's welfare. Older pupils have good opportunities to develop teamwork on the annual residential visit. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Cultural development is good. The school's inclusive ethos is reinforced by many opportunities to learn about and celebrate a range of cultures and fosters good relationships. The school has been accorded the Healthy Schools' Bronze Award in recognition of its work to promote healthy lifestyles. Pupils say they particularly enjoy taking part in activities outside of lessons. These involve many pupils and some achieve high standards in music and sport. Attendance has declined this year and is unsatisfactory.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the stronger teaching, children are taught new skills effectively and shown how to improve their work. A few lessons lack clear focus and pace and do not challenge the children to achieve to their best. This applies most commonly to the younger pupils. Learners with visual impairments benefit from skilled support, and there is good teaching which enables children at an early stage of learning English to take advantage of the full curriculum. Feedback from other support staff to class teachers on the progress of individuals or groups of pupils is not systematically recorded, and thus does not give teachers the opportunity to gain a clear picture of pupils' learning. Whilst most of the pupils' work is regularly marked, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking, and pupils do not always have clear guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, and there are some good features. It is broad and balanced and opportunities are provided for pupils to practise their skills in reading and writing in other subjects. However, initiatives to boost writing have not yet borne fruit and pupils have few opportunities to extend their skills in ICT due to a lack of computers in classrooms. The school is working hard to enable pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities take full advantage of the curriculum, but provision is being reorganised, and systems are not yet fully working. The curriculum is enriched by 'Super Learning' themed weeks related to festivals, music and the arts. A strong partnership with the Manchester Music Service and skilled specialist teaching enables pupils to achieve well in music and all pupils in years 3 to 6 have good opportunities to learn to play an instrument.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils feel safe in school. They know who to turn to for help. Instances of bullying are rare and any 'niggles' are dealt with effectively by the staff. The school has improved the promotion of health and safety and now has qualified first aiders. Procedures for child protection are in place. However, arrangements for the supervision of pupils are not strict enough at dinnertime or during informal play which results in some poor behaviour. Proper hygiene routines in the Nursery are not always observed. Systems for tracking pupils' achievement over time are in place and targets are set for some pupils, but this is inconsistent across the school. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to be involved in the assessment of their own learning. Links with outside agencies, including the Visually Impaired Unit, provide an effective range of help for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Day-to-day leadership is effective in ensuring staff and pupils work in an orderly environment and in providing well for features of pupils' personal development. Managers are not yet succeeding in raising standards in writing or in getting the best out of all pupils. Arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and review have been underdeveloped until very recently and this has reduced the capacity of managers to raise standards in their subjects. The new interim school leadership team has established priorities to tackle some of the weaknesses which have remained unresolved since the previous inspection. With the support of the local authority it is now setting up a better monitoring system to enable leaders to gain a more accurate view of the school's performance. This work is in its infancy and its impact has yet to be seen in terms of better achievement. The school's plan for improvement lacks a long-term perspective and does not concentrate closely enough on the key priorities that will really move it on. The governing body is highly experienced and its role as a critical friend is improving.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We visited your school to see how well you were learning. Thank you for making us welcome and for being helpful when we asked you questions. We enjoyed meeting you and appreciated the friendly way you inspected us to check if our faces matched our badges!

We judge that, overall, you are receiving a satisfactory education. There are some good things about your school, but we also found out a few ways in which your learning could be better. For that reason inspectors may visit again in the near future.

We were impressed by how well you got on with each other and the staff. You told us about your many successes in sport and music. You mostly behave well in lessons, which helps you learn. We also liked seeing the responsible way you carried out your jobs as monitors and your school council duties.

We have asked the acting headteacher and the staff to check more thoroughly the work of the school. We also want them to make sure teaching is consistently good for all of you, to make better use of targets and assessment to help you learn faster and to help you improve your writing. You can help by getting to know your targets and by telling your teachers if you are not sure how you can improve your work.

Finally, you, your families and the school need to work really hard together to ensure you all attend school each day so that you do not miss out on your learning.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school. We hope you will carry on enjoying school and helping your teachers to make Cavendish Primary an even better place to be.