

Margaret McMillan Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107291
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	287782
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Ann Sharpe

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	520
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr Paul Terry
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002
School address	Scotchman Road Heaton Bradford West Yorkshire BD9 5DF
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Almost all of the pupils attending this large urban school are of Pakistani heritage, and most speak English as an additional language. Pupils live close to the school in a neighbourhood that suffers from significant social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is average. Since the previous inspection, there have been many staff changes, including a new headteacher and deputy headteacher in September 2006. The inspection took place very early in a new school year, and children were still being admitted into the Nursery.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Margaret McMillan Primary is a satisfactory school that gives satisfactory value for money. It is a safe, caring, happy and friendly school that is building on a previous success in improving pupils' literacy skills. In a very short time, headteacher and deputy headteacher, who are both inspirational and dedicated, have got to grips with the school. Together, they are steering everyone in the right direction, so that the needs of pupils, staff, parents and carers are at the very heart of everything that is done. Consequently, the school has started to reverse a falling trend in standards. Everyone is keen to play their part in the new agenda for the future, and there is a strong sense of working as a united team. Although there is much still to do, the morale of staff is high and the stage is set for a brighter future. The school's many good partnerships help it to reach out into the wider community for help with improving the quality of pupils' education.

Pupils' achievement from their low starting points in Nursery is satisfactory and standards are similarly low by Year 6. The school's recent focus on getting children off to the best start possible, so that standards by Years 2 and 6 improve, has already shown success. There has not been time, however, for this success to influence Year 2 results fully. Pupils often make good progress in English because of a strong tradition of improving the provision for the many pupils who speak English as an additional language. Although pupils' progress in mathematics has remained poor for several years, the school has started to put this right. There are early signs of improvement in pupils' ability to work problems through in their heads and use basic numeracy skills. Although mathematics results improved a little in 2007, this was not enough to bridge the wide gap between standards in English and standards in mathematics. Pupils' satisfactory progress in basic skills gives them a sound jumping off point when they transfer to secondary schools.

Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6, although improving, are satisfactory. Not all lessons 'fire up' pupils' enthusiasm and enjoyment or provide the opportunities pupils need to become independent learners and to take responsibility. Teachers' recent attention to assessing pupils' attainment carefully, tracking their progress and planning work to match curricular targets, is an improvement. Nevertheless, there are times when teachers do not use the information well enough to plan work that builds on what pupils can already do, so that pupils reach the challenging personal targets set for them. Also, pupils do not know enough about how they need to improve in order to achieve their goals. This hinders their learning and progress over time.

Pupils' personal, social and emotional development are satisfactory. Behaviour is good, and pupils say how much difference the playground friends scheme has made to their enjoyment of school. They thoroughly enjoy the impressive range of interesting visits, visitors and clubs, and say that these activities 'make learning fun'. Pupils' good knowledge of staying safe and healthy stems from the good curriculum for personal development. Attendance has improved because of the school's determination to meet attendance targets and because of the dedicated support of the home-school liaison officer. The care and support of pupils, including those with learning disabilities and or difficulties (LDD) and pupils who need help to understand English, is good.

Although leadership, management and governance are satisfactory, this is a school that knows its strengths and weaknesses well. It sets very challenging targets for improving standards,

teaching and attendance, and takes firm action to try to meet them. There has not been enough time, however, for the good work done already to feed through into national assessment and test results. Nevertheless, the very good leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher give the school good capacity to improve its performance in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. When children start Nursery, their skills are considerably lower than expected for their age, especially in mathematics. They make good progress, and standards when they transfer to Year 1 are close to national expectations. The coordinator gives strong leadership and staff work together closely, with high quality support from nursery nurses and other adults. Good teaching ensures that children settle quickly into school and enjoy learning from a wide range of exciting activities, indoors and outdoors. Arrangements for admitting children into Nursery and transferring to Reception and Year 1 classes are sensitive and well thought through. Consequently, children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. A high standard of care, along with continually improving links with parents and carers, helps children to make a very good start with learning to read, write and understand mathematics. Procedures for assessing children's skills and setting them learning targets are still evolving, however, the coordinator has a clear view of what needs to happen next.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards across the school, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure a more consistently good picture of teaching and learning.
- Use information about what pupils can already do to plan work that helps them to reach their targets and to inform them what they have to do to improve.

A small proportion of schools where overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although standards by Year 6 are low, pupils' achievement, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, is satisfactory. National test and assessment results in Years 2 and 6 have dipped since the previous inspection, especially in mathematics, where pupils' progress has been slow for several years. Pupils consistently make best progress in English, however, and results are improving. Year 2 writing results in 2007, for example, were close to the national average. This is because the school's thrust for several years has been on improving pupils' speaking, listening and literacy skills. There has not been the same attention given to raising standards in mathematics, but the school has recently started an intensive programme to tackle the low standards, and pupils' progress is beginning to speed up. This improvement in the rate of pupils' learning is not confined to mathematics; there is evidence that many pupils across the school have started to learn more quickly than before in reading and writing, too.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. Pupils are happy at school and their attendance has improved, so that there are now fewer interruptions to their learning. Pupils are polite and friendly, and behaviour is good. The new school council members talk enthusiastically about how they have helped to deter bullying and encouraged safe and friendly behaviour in the playground. Pupils show their good understanding of healthy lifestyles by making informed choices for school dinners and by eating lots of fruit and drinking water regularly. Taking part in a good range of sporting activities helps them to enjoy keeping fit. They love taking part in occasional community events, such as the Lord Mayor's Parade, and going on visits, for example the residential visit to London. Pupils' satisfactory progress in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) give them a sound start to their secondary education. Their enjoyment and engagement in lessons is variable, however, and they do not take much responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although the proportion of good lessons is increasing, there is not yet the consistently good pattern of teaching and learning that the headteacher and deputy headteacher are striving for. Nevertheless, close checking and programmes of training and support for staff have started to pay dividends. Positive relationships with pupils, purposeful planning and skilful questioning are now features of many lessons. Teachers now understand the part they must each play in accelerating pupils' learning. To this end, they have started to take more notice of whether or not pupils are making the progress they should. The new curriculum targets provide a broad focus for planning pupils' work, but teachers do not always take full account of what pupils can already do. This slows the learning of some pupils, including the more capable ones and those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. Some lessons lack the interest and excitement that pupils need in order to capture their full attention.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory range of activities to meet the needs of pupils and help them to enjoy their education. Initiatives to accelerate pupils' learning of basic literacy and numeracy skills are showing clear signs of success, for example in writing. Not all pupils have a numeracy lesson every day, however, and this sometimes hinders efforts to raise standards in mathematics. Although there are some meaningful links between subjects and clear, exciting plans to extend them, not all lessons motivate pupils and make them eager to get involved. Provision for learning ICT skills and using these skills as part of work in other subjects is satisfactory. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education gives pupils a good understanding of the importance of staying safe, fit and healthy. Pupils enjoy an extensive number and range of visits, visitors, clubs and themed events, such as 'French Day'.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils say that they feel safe and always have someone to turn to for help. Child protection procedures and arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. A strong team of bilingual support staff ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged if they do not understand English. The home-school liaison officer plays a major part in helping pupils and their parents and carers to benefit more fully from what the school has to offer. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled at tracking pupils' progress, spotting underachievement and dealing with it. Consequently, there is good support for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and or disabilities. The school has started to focus more strongly on pupils who are gifted, talented or more capable, so that they too can have extra help if they need it. Although there is good care and support for pupils, academic guidance is satisfactory. The quality of marking of work is variable, and pupils have little understanding of what they need to do in order to reach the challenging targets they have been set.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The new headteacher and deputy headteacher are making a significant difference to the school's capacity to improve. They have quickly got a measure of the school and work tirelessly to tackle the problems that have been holding the school back in recent years. Consequently, teachers say how much they welcome the open approach to managing change. They talk with enthusiasm about the 'journey' they are undertaking together to get things back on track and their 'accountability' for pupils' progress. As a result, standards are starting to improve, and weaknesses in mathematics are being tackled with the same vigour as standards in English were in previous years. Although self-evaluation is in the early stages, and governors have not yet been involved, the school has an accurate view of all aspects of its work, along with satisfactory written plans for taking the school forward. Hardworking senior staff are well focused on raising standards by setting targets and helping everyone to work together towards meeting them.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Margaret McMillan Primary School, Bradford BD9 5DF

We thoroughly enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you for talking to us and for answering all our questions so politely. Your behaviour was good, and we were pleased to see you all getting along so well together. Your attendance has improved recently, and everyone is trying hard to help the school to reach the attendance targets. Adults care a great deal about you. They keep you safe and happy at school, and we were impressed with how much you know about keeping yourselves safe and healthy. If you need extra help in lessons or at home, there is often a caring adult there for you.

We know that there have been a lot of changes of teachers recently, and your new headteacher and deputy headteacher have only been at the school for a short time. Although your school is satisfactory, it is getting better. There are several good things about it that you should feel proud of, especially your Year 6 test results in English, which are improving. Your mathematics results are not as good, and the school has not been quick enough to put this right. Things have started to get better now, however, and your mathematics results are creeping up nearer to your English results. Children in Nursery and Reception classes do well with learning all the things they need to.

Teaching is getting better, but your headteacher and deputy headteacher know that you need even more good lessons. Although you really enjoy visits, visitors and clubs, we found that you did not enjoy some lessons very much, and that teachers did not always ask you to get involved in exciting ways. Although your learning is satisfactory, we think that it could easily be good, if you had more interest in what you are doing. Your teachers know a lot about what you can already do, and you will remember that we asked a lot of you about your learning targets. You were not able to tell us very much about what you have to do to improve and to reach higher levels of work because your teachers have not told you yet. This means that your work is sometimes either too easy or too hard for you.

We have asked your school to make sure that your mathematics test results improve faster, and that you enjoy more of your lessons in all subjects. We have also asked that teachers always give you work that you find is just right for you - neither too hard nor too easy. You can help by continuing to behave so very well and by asking teachers how you can do better.