



# Miriam Lord Community Primary School

Inspection Report

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Better  
education  
and care

**Unique Reference Number** 107296  
**Local Authority** Bradford  
**Inspection number** 287786  
**Inspection dates** 24–25 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Roger Gill

This inspection of the school 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>	Church Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Manningham, Bradford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		West Yorkshire BD8 8RE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 496611
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	488	<b>Fax number</b>	01274 771874
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Alan Forbes-Wake
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Angela Ronicle
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 January 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This large school is situated in an area of marked economic disadvantage. The vast majority of children are from Asian British backgrounds; only a few are from other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of children who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Nearly all pupils are learning English as an additional language and over half are at an early stage. The entire senior leadership team has been appointed since the school's last inspection in 2002. Moreover, there has been a high turnover of staff throughout the school. The school received an Investor in Pupils' Award in 2005 and an ActiveMark in 2006. The school has outgrown its accommodation. Extensions to the building are planned but, meanwhile, some aspects of the school such as the playground space are unsuitable. Accommodation for the Foundation Stage has been improved recently.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has shown exceptional skill in navigating the school through some major difficulties, which have occurred since September 2004. A deficit budget in 2004-05 and the subsequent programme of redundancy caused the instability. Since then, children's rate of progress declined sharply, as a result of the disruptions to teaching caused by the rapid turnover in staff. The school is now back on track: it is satisfactory and improving quickly. It has made uneven progress since its last inspection, but the momentum has been strong since the turmoil in 2004. Financially and educationally stable, the school has a good capacity to take advantage of its recent successes. The headteacher has appointed a senior leadership team that shares the load well. The governing body is now a satisfactory force for change. Despite being at the beginning of its recovery, the school knows itself well, only being slightly too self-critical about the strength of its curriculum.

Children's achievements, by the end of Year 6, are satisfactory, including those by children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In relation to the costs involved, the school provides adequate value for money. This level of achievement represents a real advance on the unsatisfactory situation that existed in 2005 and 2006. It now matches the progress made in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and Years 1 and 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, but improving. Standards in science fell dramatically after 2004, but they are now improving, owing to the concentration on teaching children to think and behave like real scientists. Standards in English and mathematics began to revive in 2006, but were still below the national average. They remain below it, but the gap is closing, with writing having made the greatest leap forward. Reading and mathematics have also rallied because the school has overhauled the way they are taught. There is scope for standards to be higher. The school is correct in judging that they could be at least in line with national averages.

Teachers and their assistants, who work primarily with children who find learning difficult, all feel positive about their work. They can see how well they are influencing children's personal development and learning by their satisfactory teaching. Indeed, there is already some good and occasionally outstanding practice. Sometimes teaching is not adept enough at challenging higher attainers or making learning practical and competitive enough for many boys. Teachers are good at setting targets with children, but there are not enough opportunities for these to be discussed in lessons. The curriculum has been strengthened to become a good resource for learning. Beyond the beneficial revisions in English, mathematics and science, the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been enhanced. Substantial advances have also been made in the Foundation Stage, partly because the improved accommodation allows children to learn in the most appropriate way for their age.

Children, parents, staff and governors are all very positive about the school's regeneration. Personal development is good, partly because the school works well with parents, members of the local authority and the community to assure children's well-being. The headteacher's outstanding drive has had a huge influence on

attendance. The zero tolerance policy on absence for extended leave has rescued attendance from its below average state. Children feel confident that the school has their best interests at heart. They show positive attitudes in respect of safe and healthy lifestyles, and enjoy everything on offer. Many, for example, talk with pleasure about the way that their writing has improved, owing to the high quality training their teachers have received. Older children revel in being able to compose more complicated sentences with more sophisticated punctuation than ever before. There is an appetite for participation in school life shown by all children. The class councils, for example, have fun in trying to double their grant in order to buy equipment that would improve the school. In this way, the basics of financial understanding, collaboration and community spirit are all developed at once.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Extend children's competence in mathematical calculation, writing, comprehension and scientific enquiry, throughout the school, to raise standards and improve achievement by the end of Year 6.
- Improve teaching to get the best from higher attainers and boys.
- Involve children more effectively in discussion about their learning and targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The beginning of an upturn in standards at the end of Year 6 in 2006 marked the end of the period of turmoil. Children's progress between Years 3 and 6 is beginning to speed up. The task of reaching goals is no longer being left until Year 6. Higher expectations are evident throughout the school. Despite the well below average attainment levels on entry to Nursery, children progress soundly in the Foundation Stage. This is partly because the Reception and Nursery classes now enjoy the same high standard of accommodation, which facilitates better progress than before in all areas of learning. Elsewhere in the school, the difference in achievement between classes leaves scope for improvement in standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. The consistency of progress being made in English, mathematics and science is not yet as strong as it could be.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children enjoy school life very much. They love being involved in its development through the class councils. Valuable lessons are learnt, which equip children for their next school and the world of work, by being encouraged to work together for the good of the school. Many claim that since behaviour has improved, they feel much safer and well cared for. Some issues relating to unfriendly behaviour remain, but these are dealt with promptly by adults and older pupils acting as 'playmates'. Positive attitudes predominate in lessons. Sometimes children's interest flags because they are not inspired or challenged enough. Attendance has improved dramatically to about average.

The school's ActiveMark award denotes how well children keep fit and healthy. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is good. It is stimulated by the opportunities for children to study their own and other faiths, and to participate in the community life of the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Satisfactory teaching, which is typical, fosters good relationships to which children respond by behaving well. Lessons have clear intentions and these are reinforced effectively by well qualified teaching assistants. Sometimes learning loses its momentum, which makes lively boys, in particular, switch off for a while. In addition, higher attainers can wait too long for more demanding work. The assessment of children's work is good and they are involved well in setting their targets, for example, in how to improve their writing. However, their progress is not discussed frequently enough in lessons to realise the full potential of this initiative. The good and occasionally outstanding lessons contain few or none of these shortcomings and children's learning whizzes along. Teaching in the Foundation Stage has a good effect on children's personal development now that classes share the same facilities, but their progress in literacy and numeracy is only satisfactory. It is too soon to see the effect of some good teaching in these aspects.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The good curriculum is instrumental in raising standards in English, mathematics and science, although there is still more to do. The extra sessions of reading comprehension, clearer advice about arithmetic and a bias towards investigative science have all played their part well. Barriers created by the drawbacks in the accommodation are circumvented by the frequent use, for example, of a leisure centre. The use of ICT has improved greatly in advance of even more facilities when the building work is complete. Provision for personal development has been equally successful, not least through the extensive programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education. The tailoring of work for children who are learning English as an additional language is most effective. The curriculum broadens children's horizons and prepares them well for the future. The many visits, including residential trips and visitors, add purpose, develop spoken language and make learning fun.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Good care and support underscore the recent improvements in children's achievement. The school works effectively to support children, particularly since so many are at an early stage in learning English. This includes the few from Eastern Europe who even

benefit from the support of a Slovakian teacher. Children feel safe because protection procedures and risk assessments are in place and working well. Guidance about how to improve work has some good features in the way that children are reminded of their targets by useful posters and marking in their books. However, the brief discussions in lessons, about the success of these targets, do little in most cases to extend skills of self-evaluation or challenge children to do a lot better. The exemplary work on improving attendance has changed parents' appreciation of why good attendance is important. Moreover, work, generally by the Parental Involvement Officer, effectively involves parents in their children's learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Barriers to progress have been tackled successfully. So much so that one parent's comment is typical of general opinion: 'The atmosphere and surroundings of the school are pleasant and children look forward to their lessons.' Nevertheless, leadership and management, all aspects taken together, are satisfactory, so far in their effect. There is potential for even better teaching, achievement and academic guidance. Moreover, governors have only just found their feet in becoming an effective managerial body. They have not had enough time to show their true colours. Outstanding leadership from the headteacher has begun the transformation of the school. Curriculum initiatives, enhanced personal development and improved use of the accommodation have all had an initial effect. The monitoring of teaching has been instrumental in closing the gap between aspirations and actual standards, but there is further to go. The school knows what to do, as expressed in its plans for development.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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**

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit because everyone was so welcoming and friendly.

You go to a satisfactory school, but one that is improving quickly. This is one of the reasons why we liked it so much. Some of the things we found particularly good are the way that all staff really do invest in you and the way your school has laid down the foundations for some great learning from you in the future. The headteacher is highly skilful at leading the school; it has come a long way in a few years. We loved the idea that the class councils are given a grant to try and double in a year. What a marvellous way to get you all working together. Last, everyone in the school seems to have a smile on their face most of the time.

We know everyone wants to do even better and we have suggested three things that we think will help. Your headteacher needs to see that reading, writing, mathematics and science levels are even higher at the end of Year 6. Teachers should make sure that lessons get the best from all of you, especially boys and any who are capable of more difficult work. Lastly, you need more chances to discuss how well you have done in reaching your targets and what to do if you have not quite made it.

You can all help by thinking hard about how you are getting on with your targets, rising to the challenge if you are given harder work to do and trying your best in English, mathematics and science. We know you can do it.