

Ladybarn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105423
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	308853
Inspection date	5 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr W Simpson
Headteacher	Mrs Lisa Vyas
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2004
School address	Briarfield Road Withington Manchester Lancashire M20 4SR
Telephone number	0161 4454898
Fax number	0161 4482652

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement, particularly in Key Stage 2; personal development and well-being especially attendance; and leadership and management overall. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation; national published assessment data; the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; interviews with senior members of staff and pupils, and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school situated in an urban area with high levels of social and economic challenge. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. Just over half the pupils come from minority ethnic groups, chiefly Pakistani and Bangladeshi. About one in three pupils speak English as an additional language. About 20 other languages are spoken, with Urdu and Bangladeshi being the two most prominent. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is average. Many more pupils than usual join or leave the school at times other than normal. The school holds the following awards: Investor in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy Schools Gold, and National Healthy Schools. Over the last year the headteacher has also been leading and managing another local primary school as part of a federation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. From exceptionally low starting points pupils make very rapid progress and achieve outstandingly well to attain standards which are consistently average or above average by the time they leave the school. Several factors contribute to the school's success, not least of which is the excellent quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and other senior managers. They ensure that the school has a rock solid rationale for its work and a crystal clear vision for its future direction. Parents are enthusiastic about the quality of education the school provides for their children. A typical comment was, 'My children love this school. I am delighted with the progress they are making and at the fantastic levels of care and support they receive.' A minority of parents expressed concern at the headteacher leading and managing two schools at the same time, but the inspection did not reveal any problem. The school has made outstanding progress since the last inspection. Staff are constantly seeking ways to make it an even better school and this indicates excellent capacity to improve even further. It offers outstanding value for money.

The quality of teaching and learning overall is outstanding. Teaching is never less than good and much is of excellent quality. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge to set tasks which are both varied and challenging. They encourage pupils to think for themselves and come up with their own answers. This enables them to become inquisitive and independent learners. The use of partner work and small-group work is exemplary. The sight of paired groups of children becoming very excited at solving a tricky mathematics problem in one classroom was a telling example of how skilful teachers are at involving pupils in their learning. With such effective teaching and an outstanding, themed curriculum which makes exciting links between subjects, it is no wonder that pupils make such rapid progress as they move up through the school. On entry to the Nursery, skills are exceptionally low. Few, if any, children have skills typically expected for their age. By the end of Reception, however, nearly all are at the nationally expected levels. They continue to progress very well during Key Stage 1 where standards are average overall. The school has worked hard to raise the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2, especially by the focused use of its advanced skills teachers as models of excellent practice. Consequently, standards have been rising steadily. In 2006, results in the national end of key stage tests were above average, representing truly outstanding achievement. Despite a dip in 2007, mainly because of a cohort with unusually large numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards in the present Year 6 are above average and results are set to mirror those of 2006. The school regularly meets or exceeds its very demanding targets. Vulnerable pupils and those for whom English is an additional language make similarly outstanding progress to the others because of the excellent support they receive.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. So too are the care, guidance and support the school provides. The school's firm belief in inclusion is translated into a harmonious and respectful school community. It is a pleasure to see pupils of all creeds and backgrounds playing and working together so harmoniously. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe in the nurturing environment it provides. Attendance is satisfactory, but is improving significantly because the school has been rigorous in raising the profile of its importance and has carried out successful work with persistent absentees and their families. The superb range of enrichment activities adds significantly to pupils' levels of confidence, self-esteem, enjoyment, and adoption of healthy lifestyles. By the time they leave, pupils are articulate and inquisitive young people with all the necessary skills to take full advantage of the next stages in their education.

Outstanding leadership and management promote excellent levels of effective teamwork. There is a palpable sense of pride on the part of all adults working in the school. The school has an accurate view of its own effectiveness because it goes to great lengths to find out the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents and pupils. The school is regarded highly in the community it serves. Classes and courses for parents and adults bring the wider community successfully into the school and promote tolerance and cohesion. The work of the school's play therapist provides effective support for vulnerable families and children. Governance is also outstanding. Governors are supportive, but are also rigorous in holding the school to account for its work and standards. In short, this excellent school sets out with a shared vision of making a significant difference to pupils' life chances, and succeeds impressively.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage. From starting points which are exceptionally low in comparison to those typical for their age when they enter the Nursery, children make outstanding progress in all aspects of their learning. They learn the skills necessary to become positive and inquisitive learners. By the end of Reception nearly all children are at levels expected for their age. This represents outstanding progress considering the extremely low starting points. Vulnerable children are quickly identified and strategies drawn up to meet their needs. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is highly skilled in catering for the wide range of children's needs. It provides children with an exceptional range of activities to stimulate their interest and help them to develop their skills as independent learners. The Foundation Stage is led and managed outstandingly well. This ensures that the excellent facilities and resources are used to maximum effect to support children's learning and to provide a safe and stimulating environment for learning and play. Highly effective links with outside agencies have been established to meet the needs of the large number of vulnerable children.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for development

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Inspection of Ladybarn Primary School, Manchester, M20 4SR

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school recently. You were very kind to me. I enjoyed talking to lots of you. What you told me helped me judge how good your school is.

You will be thrilled to hear that you go to an outstanding school. I was so impressed with the progress you make. Your teachers work very hard to make sure you get excellent teaching. In return, you also work very hard and enjoy your learning. It was very good to see how well you all get on together in lessons and on the playground. You told me how much you enjoy school and I am not surprised. Your headteacher and all the adults working with you really do want every one of you to succeed and do your best. They are giving you an excellent start in life to help you take advantage of the next steps in your education. You are fortunate to go to such a successful school. I am confident that you will continue to work hard with your teachers to make sure it remains so successful and goes from strength to strength in future.

With best wishes for the future.