

Marland Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105778
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308946
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	357
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Peter Millray
Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Weatherhead
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Roch Mills Crescent off Roch Valley Way Rochdale Lancashire OL11 4QW

Age group	3–11
Inspection date	21 October 2008
Inspection number	308946

Telephone number
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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 in writing, the quality of teaching and the promotion of community cohesion. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, and classroom observations. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors, and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. 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 its self-evaluation were not justified.

Description of the school

The school is larger than most and moved into a new building on the original site in 2006 after a year in temporary accommodation. The area is adversely affected by social and economic deprivation and more pupils than usual enter or leave the school partway through their education. Just over half the pupils are of White British heritage. Other pupils are mainly of Pakistani heritage and a few are from Eastern Europe; many of these pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Over twice the national average of pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. A hearing impaired resource base is located within the school and pupils attend lessons with their peers. The school holds many awards including Silver Artsmark, Activemark and Healthy Schools. It also has the Extended Schools Award and Leading Literacy School status.

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 that provides education and care of the highest quality. The inspection confirmed the school's view of how effective it is. The inspirational and dedicated leadership of the headteacher is demonstrated in the school motto, 'Reach for the stars.' Pupils really believe in the philosophy of 'I can', so they flourish personally and academically and gain valuable skills for the future. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their community cohesion work; this is a major strength of the school. One spoke for many by saying, 'We try to make peace in our local community.' Parents praise the school and many report how happy their children are. A typical comment is, 'The school is second to none.' The excellent work of the school is widely recognised and often used as a basis for training, for example, in circle time activities.

From very low starting points when they enter school, pupils of all capabilities make excellent progress as a result of consistently high quality teaching and learning throughout the school. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Staff are rightly proud of the school's Leading Literacy status and make great efforts to find imaginative ways to improve writing skills. Pupils start school with limited language skills which hold them back, so, although progress in writing is good, few reach the higher level. The innovative ways of boosting the speaking and listening skills of younger pupils are not as prevalent higher up the school, particularly in relation to more able pupils.

An outstanding, creative curriculum adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment and achievement. During the inspection, all activities were linked to the world studies theme; younger pupils made Masai neck rings and older pupils compared England with South Africa. Specialist teaching and very skilled teaching assistants provide first-rate support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This enables every pupil, including those from the hearing resource base, to take a full part in all learning and social activities. Enrichment is very strong, with visits, visitors, French, art, music and dance adding colour and sound to the vibrant school community. Very good links with local schools enhance provision, for example, in physical education and sports, and after-school clubs are very popular and very well attended.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils really enjoy school and list many things they like, including the physical education equipment, the residential visit and taking part in outdoor pursuits, such as kayaking, rock climbing and orienteering. They have a very good understanding of how to look after their health and appreciate the lunchtime salad bar. They say they feel safe in school, and value the 'break-out' areas and circle time 'dream journeys' to reflect on feelings and emotions in a calm atmosphere. Behaviour is exemplary and makes a very strong contribution to pupils' progress. They said they do not know of any bullying and confidently seek help from teachers or play leaders when needed. Attendance is broadly average. Pupils carry out jobs sensibly, becoming increasingly mature as they move through school and take on more responsibility. Pupils have a strong sense of their future in society and are keen to help others and also their local community. The community cohesion project with the neighbouring school provides genuine opportunities for pupils' views to be heard as they present ideas for a 'New Town' at Rochdale Town Hall. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Reciprocal visits to and from the partner school in South Africa provide first-hand awareness of the global community and the needs of children in a very different cultural setting. There is always a quiet hum of excitement around the school, for example, in

the world studies assembly and in Year 2 when pupils saw a jungle picture appear on the whiteboard.

Pastoral care is of the highest level and parents are welcomed as partners in their children's education. Parents praise the way children with additional needs are supported; all external agencies are involved to benefit pupils and their families. Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements. Excellent systems track academic progress rigorously so staff know precisely how well pupils are progressing and where to direct extra help. Pupils know their targets, can say exactly what they are aiming to achieve and know what to do to get there.

The headteacher has excellent support from the deputy headteacher, assistant headteachers, staff and governors. Leaders and staff are equally committed to her unswerving aim for all pupils to reach their potential. The individual talents of all members of staff are recognised and enhanced so they develop professionally and make an even greater impact on their pupils' learning. The school has made great strides forward since the previous inspection. It has a new building, an exciting curriculum, outstanding provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and uses challenging academic targets very effectively. It therefore gives excellent value for money and has outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are low for their age, particularly in the area of language and communication. Outstanding teaching by a very effective team ensures that each child is warmly welcomed and settles quickly, ready for learning. The excellent curriculum provides an impressive range of exciting learning experiences that capture children's natural curiosity and challenge them to investigate and discover. Staff work very hard to extend speaking and listening skills through regular, highly structured language sessions. Children are encouraged to talk, discussing colours and textures whilst making African neck rings, or comparing the length of snakes in the jungle. Children love being out in the fresh air in the very well planned outdoor area. They explore activities in all areas of learning, watch the changing seasons and use the challenging physical equipment safely and carefully.

Outstanding leadership ensures that care and welfare are of the highest quality and children feel safe, secure and valued. They rapidly gain in confidence, making independent choices from the range of activities, deciding when to have their snack and sharing equipment without fuss. Parents are very pleased that their children are so happy and comment 'Our children go to Nursery smiling and excited.' Children make excellent progress in all areas of learning but their skills are still below those typical for their age at the end of Reception class.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the very effective practice already evident in Key Stage 1 to develop speaking and listening skills of older, more able pupils in order to accelerate their progress in writing.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

Inspection of Marland Hill Community Primary School, Rochdale,
OL11 4QW

Thank you all for helping me when I inspected your school. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, boys and girls came to school especially early and made me very welcome when I arrived. All the children I met were really polite, friendly and very helpful. Your singing in assembly was wonderful and I could see everyone joining in and clapping along with the singers and drummers. This letter is to tell you what I found out.

Marland Hill is an outstanding school. Your headteacher and governors provide excellent leadership. They take very good care of you, set you many challenges so you make excellent progress in your work. You really enjoy your lessons and all the extra activities the school provides. You can learn outside, go to the Forest School and enjoy many exciting outdoor pursuits, like kayaking.

I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour. Your parents and teachers are very proud of you. You know how to be healthy and stay safe. The monitors, play leaders and councillors do a very good job and you all try to help each other. Another thing that particularly impressed me was your work on community cohesion; you are really trying to help make your community a better, safer place. You told me how you help the children in South Africa and I know you are looking forward to their teachers visiting you soon.

I think some older pupils could do even better in your writing, so I have asked the school to do this by developing your speaking and listening skills to help you to plan and organise your ideas before you write. Your parents are very happy with the school and what it is doing for you. I am sure you will continue to work hard, enjoy everything you do and aim to 'Reach for the stars.'