

Wilbraham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131444
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	315809
Inspection date	22 April 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	424
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Ruth Jackson
Headteacher	Mr Tim Hatcliffe
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2004
School address	Platt Lane Fallowfield Manchester Lancashire M14 7FB
Telephone number	0161 2243900
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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, teaching and learning and the curriculum and other activities. 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 the 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 much larger than average primary school serving an urban area of very challenging social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is exceptionally high. Over three quarters of pupils come from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. Overall, about half of all pupils speak English as an additional language. In total, 23 different languages are spoken by pupils as their first language; Arabic, Urdu and Somali are the main languages spoken. The numbers of pupils joining and leaving the school during the school year is above average; many who join have little or no English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average but more pupils than average have a statement of special educational need. The school has gained the sport Activemark award. The school houses a Sure Start centre providing a range of services for families with babies and young children.

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 for many reasons. Consistently high quality teaching and support enable the vast majority of pupils to overcome barriers to their learning so that their achievement is outstanding. The school reaches out successfully to the local community to include whole families in learning and the life of the school. The school's leadership is outstandingly effective in promoting teamwork which focuses intensely on inclusion and is highly successful in ensuring the school makes a real difference to the life chances of its pupils. Nearly all parents are very supportive of the school. 'It's kind of like a big family. We always feel welcome. Lots of us attend the adult classes because it helps us understand the kind of things the children are learning,' was a typical comment. Since the last inspection the school has made outstanding progress. Excellent leadership and a constant quest for even further improvement are giving the school outstanding capacity to improve even further. It gives outstanding value for money.

From exceptionally low starting points, children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 where they make outstanding progress. This is especially evident in their personal development and in the way that they develop positive attitudes to learning so that they are fully prepared for the more academic demands of Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well below average and below average in mathematics. Building on this very positive start, pupils' respond with enthusiasm to the consistently demanding teaching in Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6). They make outstanding progress as a result. By the end of Year 6, standards overall are broadly average and demanding targets are met except in English where pupils' writing skills, although improving year-on-year, are well below average and not yet as high as they could be. Because of the very successful and focused provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language, they, too, make outstanding progress in line with other pupils.

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Demanding and challenging teaching is one of the main reasons why pupils achieve so well. It is consistent in encouraging pupils to think for themselves so that they become motivated, independent learners. The school has very sophisticated procedures for tracking the progress of individual pupils. Teachers make excellent use of the information in planning their lessons to make sure that the tasks they set pupils are appropriate to their needs. Teaching assistants play a pivotal role in supporting pupils with identified extra needs both in class and in small, separate groups. Again, tracking information is used effectively to tailor provision effectively to these pupils' needs. Although the school judges its curriculum as good, it is outstanding because it plays such an effective part in supporting pupils' outstanding learning. It is especially successful in providing enriching activities, such as educational visits that not only broaden pupils' horizons but are also used to provide practical experience on which to base teaching and learning across a range of subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as are the care, guidance and support the school provides. Inclusion is at the heart of all the school does. It is a pleasure to see how harmoniously pupils from diverse backgrounds interact. They are polite, respectful and most behave impeccably. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe in the nurturing environment it provides. Attendance has improved because the school has been rigorous in raising the profile of its importance and tackling persistent absentees and their families. Pupils grow in confidence as they move up through the school. However, the low standards they attain, particularly in English, mean their preparation for the future stages of their education is only satisfactory.

The excellent leadership provided by the headteacher, ably supported by other senior and middle managers, provides the school with a clear vision for the future, which everyone understands and is keen to implement. There is a palpable sense of pride in the school on the part of all adults working there. Highly effective procedures for checking on performance and for self-evaluation are in place, enabling the school to identify accurately what it does well and where it could improve even further. Governors are very supportive of the school. The composition of the governing body is growing in diversity to reflect the local community. It is increasingly prepared to act as a critical friend as parent governors grow in confidence and are encouraged to play a more active role in the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to an excellent start in the Foundation Stage unit. From starting points which are exceptionally low in comparison to those typical for their age when they enter the Nursery, children make outstanding progress, especially in their personal development. They learn the skills necessary to become positive and inquisitive learners. By the end of Reception, although attainment is well below age-related expectations, this still represents very good progress considering the extremely low starting points. For many pupils in the Foundation Stage unit, weak skills in English are a significant barrier to learning. Their needs are identified at an early stage and dedicated support is provided to accelerate their progress. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is highly skilled in catering for the wide range of pupils' 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

- Raise standards, especially 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 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	3
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	1
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	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?	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	2
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**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I very much enjoyed meeting you and talking to so many of you. What you told me helped me to find out how good your school is.

You will be pleased to know that I think your school gives you an excellent education. I was really impressed with how well you get on with your work as you move up through the school. By the end of Year 6, your work shows how hard you have tried and how much your teachers have helped you. However, you could do even better, especially in your writing, so I am asking your school to help you to improve this even more.

Your teachers make sure that they give you really interesting lessons. I was pleased to see how much you enjoyed your lessons and how keen you were to learn. You come from a really wide variety of backgrounds and many of you are still learning to speak English, so it was really good to see how well you all get on together and help each other. Your headteacher is doing a super job in caring for you and the local community. I am sure everyone appreciates how hard he works. He and all the adults working with you are doing all they can to make sure that you do as well as you can. I was pleased to see that now more of you come to school more often. Do make sure you keep doing this so that you make the most of all the things school can give you.

I am sure that you will carry on working really hard and play your part in making sure that your school stays a really enjoyable place to be and gets better and better.