

# Lark Hill Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132147
<b>Local Authority</b>	Salford
<b>Inspection number</b>	319561
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Price Grimshaw

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	226
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	12
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Harry Almond
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Liam Fry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2007
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Liverpool Street Salford Lancashire M5 4BJ

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 October 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	319561

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**Age group** 3–11

**Inspection dates** 14–15 October 2008

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## Introduction

When Lark Hill Primary School was inspected in July 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to pupils' standards and achievement, teaching and subject leadership. It was subsequently visited in March 2008, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although there are a number of pupils from other backgrounds, including Turkish, Eastern European and Somalian, who speak English as an additional language. The school has the Healthy Schools award. There is a SureStart Children's Centre on the premises providing pre-school education and care, and many children attending the centre transfer to the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). This facility was not included in the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

A determined effort by all staff has resulted in considerable improvements over the past year, and Lark Hill is now a good school. An intensive focus on providing high quality academic support and guidance has been a key factor in improving pupils' achievement and standards. The development of strong leadership in English, mathematics and science has resulted in greater consistency in classroom practice. So, the overall quality of teaching and learning is now good. Above all, the positive approach of staff to working as a team in tackling issues raised at the last inspection has been central in bringing about rapid improvement.

The school's work in developing excellent relationships with parents is reflected in their praise and support. Many say that they are, 'glad to have chosen Lark Hill'. Parents speak with much appreciation about the approachability of staff, making comments such as, 'the teachers are such warm, friendly and helpful people'. The school has worked very successfully to increase parents' involvement in their children's education. Parents speak with enthusiasm about their awareness of their children's targets, and say that, 'lots of us want to help our children – and this school goes out of its way to help us do that.' Pupils are delighted when their parents receive 'V.I.P.' certificates for being 'Very Involved Parents'.

Inspection evidence shows that standards by the end of Year 6 are now broadly in line with national expectations for pupils' age. This represents good progress because children are well below the expected levels when they start school. The school uses data well to track the progress of individual pupils and to set achievable and challenging targets for the great majority. Nevertheless, now that inadequate achievement across the school has been tackled, there is scope for providing greater challenge for the most able pupils so that they fully meet their potential. The good quality curriculum, which provides many opportunities for pupils to practise literacy and numeracy skills, is now being developed to ensure even greater breadth of study. Outstanding quality guidance and support help to ensure that almost all pupils now make good progress. The 'Oasis' unit within the school provides tailored programmes in literacy and numeracy development for those pupils needing additional support, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils who speak a home language other than English are also well supported. This is much appreciated by parents, as reflected in the comment; 'teachers have helped my child to made big improvements in English, which is her third language'.

Pupils are polite, well mannered and have good attitudes towards school. They clearly enjoy their education and are keen to talk about how they are helped by 'adults who really care'. They relish the opportunity to take on responsibilities and work as part of the school and local communities. Social and cultural development, including awareness and appreciation of the global community, is successfully promoted. This was evident in one lesson where pupils used computers to create presentations on their home life and interests in a variety of languages, and then went on to share these with class members. Most pupils worked in Spanish, which is being successfully taught in Key Stages 1 and 2, but others chose Turkish, French, Czech and Somalian.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have worked together effectively to drive improvements over the past year. They have an accurate overview of the school's strengths and areas for development, and have used this information well in responding quickly and

efficiently to addressing weaknesses. The roles of subject leaders in literacy, numeracy and science have been significantly developed and enhanced, and the impact of this can be seen in the improved outcomes for pupils.

In comparison, the roles of leaders in other curriculum areas are currently underdeveloped, and, consequently, their impact in raising standards in these subjects is limited. Nevertheless, the school's improvement planning shows a clear sense of direction and the school benefits from the continued support of the local authority. This, together with the school's track record since the last inspection, indicates that there is good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The previous inspection report identified a number of strengths in the provision for Nursery and Reception classes. Over the past year these strengths have been consolidated and built upon, with the result that provision in the EYFS is now outstanding. Children enter the EYFS with skills that are well below those typically expected, particularly in communication and social skills. The highly personalised support they receive from specialist staff results in the majority making excellent progress, and by the end of the EYFS many are working securely within the early learning goals. One of the underlying principles of Lark Hill's EYFS unit, as outlined in its policy document, is the recognition that 'children on entry to our setting are powerful, competent, independent learners.' All staff subscribe to this and work skilfully to maximise the potential of each child. Children play happily outdoors, for example, working as a team to build a 'rocket', learning how to tend the garden, or measuring rainwater in cylinders. Their activities are captured by other children developing their photography skills with digital cameras, who then transfer the images to computers. Children's learning is regularly observed and assessed by staff, who use this information to ensure that each child is given specific opportunities to develop further skills. Beautifully presented 'learning stories' give details of how individual children are making progress; these are displayed and shared with parents. The EYFS is exceptionally well led and managed. The EYFS leader has a very clear vision for the future, and staff show exceedingly high levels of commitment and dedication.

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

- Improve achievement and standards for the most able pupils.
- Develop the roles of subject leaders other than for literacy, numeracy and science, so that they play a more active part in raising standards in their specialist areas.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2. Following the previous inspection in 2007, the school worked hard to tackle underachievement and exceptionally low standards, and inspection evidence indicates significant improvement. Beneficial advances in teaching and learning and excellent academic guidance have caused this recovery. Current standards by the end of Year 6 now meet national expectations with particular improvement in science. Data suggest that the school met its targets in English, and exceeded those in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 has increased lately. However, not all pupils capable of reaching the higher levels do so, and the school recognises the need to ensure that such pupils are always suitably

challenged. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of consistently high quality support.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils say that their school is a safe place with, 'loads of good things to do'. They are friendly and supportive towards each other, and say that rare instances of bullying are dealt with very well by staff who are sensitive, understanding and kind. Behaviour is consistently good, both in lessons and around the school grounds. Attendance is in line with the national average because the school is not complacent in its efforts to promote good attendance and punctuality. Pupils understand the importance of regular exercise, and say that, 'to have a balanced diet you need to choose carefully from each of the main food groups.' School council members are proud to represent their classmates and are actively involved in bringing about improvements to the school environment. Pupils have a good awareness of other faiths and cultures as shown in the very attractive displays around the school's corridors. Preparation for life after Lark Hill is satisfactory; pupils have secure basic skills and a sound understanding of the world of work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Variability in the quality of classroom practice has been addressed, and teaching and learning are now consistently good. Teachers have very good working relationships with their pupils and use praise and encouragement effectively to motivate them. Good quality planning is reviewed on an ongoing basis and lesson content adjusted accordingly so that the needs of individuals are met. Teachers use information and communication technology (ICT) well to enhance pupils' understanding. Teaching assistants and other support staff are effectively deployed and provided valuable input to lessons. Teachers aim to provide fun, practical lessons that keep pupils interested. In some cases, teachers seek pupils' views on teaching and learning, as shown in examples of good quality written dialogue on lesson evaluations completed by pupils. Marking of pupils' work is at least good. Teachers write extensive comments and make clear to pupils exactly what they need to do to improve further. Consequently, they make good progress. Although the most able pupils achieve well overall, the work provided for them is not always sufficiently challenging.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

Over the past year, the curriculum has, understandably, been focused largely on the development of reading, writing, mathematical and scientific skills. Nevertheless, the school has taken care to ensure that, through studying a range of subjects, the needs and interests of all pupils are met, and is now working to extend and develop the curriculum in a variety of areas. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills, particularly writing, across the curriculum. Provision for ICT is also good. The school promotes community cohesion well through a range of topic work related to faiths and cultures within the wider community. The curriculum is enriched through visits and a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are very popular with pupils.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Pupils and parents alike could not speak highly enough of the pastoral care provided by school staff. They comment that staff take a genuine interest and, 'go out of their way' to help. The well-being of individual pupils is very carefully monitored, and staff sensitively follow up any concerns they might have. This has a strong impact on pupils' emotional development, and all, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, feel that they are genuinely cared for. Parents say that, 'staff here are like part of the family – they don't talk down to you and really want to help wherever they can.' The school works very well in partnership with a number of external agencies in ensuring that pupils' needs are fully met. Academic guidance is excellent, and has improved significantly over the past year. All staff review pupils' progress regularly and set individual targets. Pupils know their targets and are very motivated to meet them. No time is lost in reviewing targets and setting new ones if necessary. Very good support and guidance is given to pupils with learning difficulties.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The quality of leadership is good and this underpins the school's recent improvement. Leadership of the core areas of literacy, numeracy and science is particularly good. These leaders meet together on a regular basis and work well as a team. They closely monitor the quality of work in their subject areas through lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work. In this way, they have formed a clear corporate view of areas for development, and have worked to ensure that all staff adopt a consistent approach to aspects of teaching and learning. Leaders in other subject areas are not currently involved in monitoring the quality of work in this way, and as such their impact on raising standards in these subjects is limited. Senior managers maintain a comprehensive overview of the school's work, and use this information well to inform good quality action planning. Governors are closely involved in monitoring the quality of the school's work, and whilst they have provided much support, particularly since the previous inspection, they have maintained rigour in holding the school to account for pupils' achievement and standards.



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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?	2
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	2

### 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?	3
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?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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 learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

Inspection of Lark Hill Community Primary School, Salford, M5 4BJ

As you know, I visited your school recently together with another inspector so that we could find out how well you are doing. I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome and for sharing your views with us. I would also like to share our main findings with you.

You attend a good school, which has improved a great deal over the past year. I could tell from your work that standards have risen recently, especially in science, so well done! You make good progress during your time at Lark Hill. I was impressed with your behaviour and really pleased to hear that you enjoy coming to school. You are friendly and kind to each other, and I was fascinated to see some of you preparing presentations in different languages on the computers! What a great variety you had – Spanish, French, Turkish, Czech, Somalian – and it was wonderful to hear you reading out your presentations. You told us that the teachers really care for you, and we could see that this is true! They all enjoy working with you and want each one of you to do as well as you possibly can. You all knew your targets, which was fantastic – and we could see that you are keen to reach them, and then set new ones, so you can get better and better. Some of your parents told me that the school helps them to support you in your work, and so they were keen to know about your targets too! I heard that some parents display the targets at home, so that you are always aware of them. Parents are pleased to receive the Very Involved Parent certificates! I thought that it was really good that the school is working so well with parents.

I think that the quality of teaching and learning in your school is good. Your teachers plan work carefully and always try to make lessons interesting for you. I noticed that they like to encourage you, and you respond well to this.

There are a few things I've suggested to the staff to make things even better at Lark Hill. I think that some of you could be given even harder work so that you reach higher standards by the time you leave. I have also suggested that the teachers in charge of subjects other than English, maths and science could keep a really close watch on what is happening in their subject areas, so you make good progress in all areas. Your headteacher and all the staff want each one of you to achieve your full potential at Lark Hill. I am really pleased that you are proud of your school and enjoy learning, and we wish you well for the future.