

Mytham Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105190
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	324178
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	325
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 W Earnshaw
Headteacher	Mrs Angela Eastwood
Date of previous school inspection	2 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Mytham Road Little Lever Bolton Lancashire BL3 1JG
Telephone number	01204 333556
Fax number	01204 333557

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Inspection number	324178

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Mytham is a large school situated south east of Bolton. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is smaller than is found nationally. There are average numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is smaller than average. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision.

There is a privately run out of school club on-site, but it did not form part of this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with a good capacity to improve further as shown by rising standards and the effective strategies school leaders have put in place to improve the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The great majority of pupils and their parents speak highly of their school. Parents typically comment that Mytham is a caring and friendly school where the staff constantly strive to bring out the very best in their children. Pupils say that they feel safe and valued in school and are confident in asking for help when they need it. School councillors comment, 'We are all equal at Mytham and treat everybody equally. Colour, religion and language do not matter as we are all people.'

By the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly in line with those found nationally and inspection evidence shows that they have improved between 2007 and 2008. In relation to their starting points, pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and vulnerable children, achieve well in all key stages. This is due to good teaching and the school's effective support for pupils who need extra help to enable them to make progress in their learning. Teaching assistants play a big part in this, working closely with individuals and small groups of pupils on focused activities to address their specific needs.

The curriculum is good. A strong feature of the school is its work in developing a creative, broad and vibrant curriculum which helps pupils to develop their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics across other subject areas. This approach is already having a positive impact on raising standards and improving progress. However, it is not yet fully in place and pupils do not have enough opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) to support their learning. Physical activities feature strongly in the school day and this helps pupils learn how to keep themselves fit and healthy.

A good range of after-school clubs and activities enriches pupils' experiences and provides opportunities for them to develop their interests in sports and creative arts.

The school cares for its pupils well and gives them good guidance and support for their academic, personal and emotional development. This results in good attendance and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils behave well in lessons, showing positive attitudes to learning. Teachers plan lessons carefully to suit the wide range of pupils' abilities. Written work is marked regularly and gives pupils useful information on their progress towards individual targets and the next steps in their learning. Procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.

Leadership and management of the school are good. School leaders are experienced in their roles, and given strong direction from the newly appointed headteacher. They work very well together as a team with the common aim of driving up standards and ensuring all pupils are supported in achieving to their full potential. A robust system is in place to check pupils' progress. This results in the early identification of any pupils who may not be doing as well as they should and that swift action follows to support them. Good links with outside agencies mean that the needs of vulnerable pupils and their families are well met. The school sets challenging targets for improvement which are shared with pupils and parents.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Children's attainment on entry to the EYFS varies from year to year, but is generally broadly in line with national expectations. Children make good progress and by the time they move into Key Stage 1, the great majority of them reach at least expected levels of skills and development in all the early learning goals with a significant group exceeding this level. Teachers and support staff ensure that there is a good balance of activities which meets the needs and interests of the children. For example, during the inspection children took part in a range of play-based activities which centred on their enthusiastic anticipation of Bonfire Night. This gave them opportunities to develop their skills in all the areas of learning whilst at the same time helping them to understand how to keep themselves safe. Relationships between adults and children are excellent and this means children really enjoy coming to school, where they play and learn happily together. Parents say that they feel welcome in school. School staff are working hard to ensure that parents are fully involved in their children's progress and can continue to support their learning at home. The EYFS is led and managed well by an experienced practitioner who ensures that careful observation of children's individual progress leads to appropriate planning for their future learning.

The learning environment is warm, bright and welcoming, but classrooms are cramped and do not fully meet children's learning needs because they cannot move freely between different activities. The outdoor area is currently adequate for children's needs and there are plans to improve it by providing a sheltered area for 'all weather' access to play and learning outdoors.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable pupils to make full use of ICT throughout the curriculum to support their learning.
- Improve the learning environment in the EYFS, ensuring that children can move freely between activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In 2008, teachers' assessments show that standards at the end of Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress for these pupils whose starting points in the Reception class were lower than those usually found on entry to the school.

At the end of Year 6 in 2007, standards dipped to below average in English, mathematics and science. The school identified that this was due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 and has worked hard and successfully to bring about improvement. Inspection evidence shows that standards in the current Year 6 are slightly above average. Boys and girls and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all make equally good progress in relation to their starting points at the end of Year 2. Achievement is strongest in English and science. The school has focused on raising standards in mathematics over the last year and the impact of this is evident in pupils' improved rate of progress. Most pupils are now reaching or exceeding their challenging targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They know the difference between right and wrong, and older pupils can talk sensitively about a range of different religious faiths. Their understanding of modern cultural diversity in their own locality and in Britain as a whole is less well developed. The school promotes pupils' personal development well through a social and emotional learning programme that has a positive impact on their behaviour and attitudes to one another. However, whilst behaviour is good overall, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils is still not as good during break times as it is in lessons. Pupils understand the importance of eating a well balanced diet and taking plenty of exercise. Staff constantly celebrate pupils' personal achievements as well as academic success. This builds a climate of confidence and self-esteem where pupils enjoy learning and playing together. They know how to keep themselves safe from harm without being unnecessarily fearful. Pupils show awareness of the needs of others and make a positive contribution to the community through a series of fund-raising events for charity and taking part in the recently formed community choir. In addition to the school's good provision for pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics, pupils are well prepared for their future life through a series of 'mini-enterprise' projects. Recently, they produced and marketed 'Pop Art' coasters, making detailed costings and then donating the profits to a charity of their own choice.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good because teachers plan their lessons well and pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and effective teamwork between teachers and support staff ensures good progress for most learners. Teachers use skilful questioning to promote independent thinking and help pupils to reflect on their achievements. They have high expectations of progress and work is carefully planned to give every pupil an appropriate level of challenge. Effective use is made of interactive whiteboards to engage pupils in their learning and add to their enjoyment. Occasionally, some tasks lack challenge and pupils spend too long listening to teachers rather than actively engaging in their learning. This means their progress is not as rapid as it could be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has developed an approach to curriculum planning which links subjects together, promotes pupils' creativity and encourages their critical thinking. Whilst not yet fully established throughout the school, this exciting development is already having a positive impact on standards and is adding a great deal to pupils' enjoyment of school. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of interesting outside visits and visitors to the school. For example, pupils recently interviewed the Mayor and had the opportunity to talk to members of the local church about their first-hand experiences in the Second World War. A strong focus on inclusion means that pupils of all ages and abilities are fully involved in the rich life of the school community. The school's provision for music is particularly good, leading to pupils' high levels of participation in musical activities and performances.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good care and pastoral support for pupils are woven into all aspects of school life. Pupils are secure in the knowledge that staff are there to listen to them and help them if they have any problems and this is supported by an effective 'buddying' system. The school works hard to quickly identify and remove barriers to learning. There is a robust system of support which ensures that the needs of those pupils who are vulnerable and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully met. Effective learning mentors liaise with outside agencies to ensure high quality support and inclusive education. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place for health and safety, child protection, equality of opportunity and safe recruitment of staff. Academic guidance is good. Most pupils understand their targets and are encouraged to take part in assessing their own progress. Teachers give clear written and verbal guidance to pupils on the next steps in their learning. Good links with local high schools ensure pupils' smooth transition to the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

A strong senior leadership team is well supported by subject leaders and school governors. They maintain a focused drive for continual school improvement. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, with high aspirations for pupils' academic and personal development. School leaders set challenging targets for improvement. Progress against these targets is systematically checked through robust tracking procedures. Thorough and regular analysis of data on pupils' progress is effective because it results in swift action within the classroom to support pupils who may not be making as much progress as they should. Governors are involved in the life of the school and have a sound knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement. They are well able to challenge school leaders and to hold them to account for the school's performance. The school gives good value for money through effective financial management and use of resources to raise standards and achievement.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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?	2
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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

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?	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	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 Mytham Primary School, Bolton, BL3 1JG

We thoroughly enjoyed our inspection of your school and would like to thank you all for being so polite and helpful. A special 'thank you' to those pupils who gave up their lunchtime to talk to us about all the exciting and enjoyable things which are happening in your school. One of the highlights of our time with you was listening to you sing so beautifully in assemblies, music lessons and the community choir.

We were all impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and how hard you all work to learn new things. We also know how lucky you are to have such kind and caring teachers who make your lessons interesting and fun and are always willing to give you a bit of extra help you when you need it. You achieve well and the standard of your work is improving.

You have a good school where you know you are safe and can learn happily together. We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school an even better place to learn. These are:

- to give you more opportunities to use computers in your classrooms
- to make the Reception classroom less cramped so that the little ones have more room to move around when they are playing and learning together.

You can help by continuing to try your very best. Also, some of you in Key Stage 2 just need to be a little bit more careful when you are playing in the yard at lunchtimes – football is great fun and keeps you fit, but please try not to knock people over when you are running around!

Thank you again for making our visit such a pleasure. Keep singing and good luck for the future!