

Aspinal Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 105390 |
| Local Authority | Manchester |
| Inspection number | 324217 |
| Inspection dates | 11–12 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Stephen Rowland |

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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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 206 |
| 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 | Ms D Mythen |
| Headteacher | Mr Neil Flint |
| Date of previous school inspection | 17 May 2006 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Broadacre Road Gorton Manchester Lancashire M18 7NY |
| Telephone number | 0161 2230053 |
| Fax number | 0161 2310658 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Aspinal Primary School is smaller than average and serves a socially diverse area of east Manchester. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a small number are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion who start or leave the school other than at the normal admission and transfer times is very high. There has also been a high level of staff mobility over recent years, although this is now stabilising.

The school has the Healthy School Gold Award, the Activemark, the Eco Bronze Award, the Manchester Fairtrade School Award, and the Manchester Award for Excellence for collaborative community activities.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| 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 outstanding features. Pupils feel safe and secure and demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty and belonging. Partnerships with parents and with the local community are particularly strong. The school's outstanding and innovative curriculum is founded on a strong awareness of the school's role within the community. This is a very caring school where the support and guidance provided for pupils are outstanding. Parents' strong support for the school was typified by the comment: 'I live a 20-minute bus ride away but I wouldn't have it any other way.'

Children start in the Nursery with skills that are well below the levels expected. Their skills in personal development and in communication, language and literacy are particularly low. After a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve standards that are above the national average. In spite of a very high level of pupil mobility, progress remains good in Key Stage 2. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6, with most pupils reaching or exceeding the targets set for them. There is scope for improvement, however as, across the school, fewer pupils than nationally reach the higher levels in all subjects and standards in writing lag behind those in other subjects. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, but there is some inconsistency. While there are some examples of outstanding practice, in a small number of lessons pupils' progress is no better than satisfactory because teachers do not share the lesson objectives with pupils and do not provide enough challenge for those who are more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, due to the outstanding support they receive.

Pupils' behaviour is good. The majority are supportive of each other, polite and respectful. They take their responsibilities in helping to make the school a safe and secure place seriously. The school council is particularly active and has helped to improve facilities in school. Pupils value the links made with the local community, which have provided them with good opportunities to meet other people and groups from a variety of ages and backgrounds. The skills pupils acquire through these activities, along with the good standards they achieve, prepare them well for adult life.

Pupils develop a clear awareness of healthy lifestyles. This is shown by their enthusiastic endorsement of the new 'Fresh Fayre' canteen arrangements. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is supported by a number of posts of responsibility for pupils, such as the 'buddy' system in which older pupils help younger ones. The community-based activities, such as a recent project on Gorton during the Second World War, have extended pupils' understanding of themselves and others.

The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have provided a clear vision and direction for the school, which all staff strongly support. This has enabled the school to achieve high standards of care and to sustain good learning. Staff have become increasingly confident in their ability to provide a stimulating and purposeful environment for the pupils, which enables them to learn and develop well. Governors have a good understanding of the school and provide effective support and challenge. The steady improvement in standards, along with the outstanding provision in the curriculum and for the care, guidance and support of pupils, demonstrates a good capacity for further improvement and good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They get a good start in the Nursery class and their good progress continues in the Reception class. By the end of the Reception Year most children are working within the levels expected of them. Children make particularly good progress in their communication skills. This was seen in the way that children in the Nursery listened and answered questions when hearing the story of 'Elmer'. Older children in the Reception class were helped to develop early reading skills by sequencing the story of 'The Ginger Bread Man' and particularly enjoyed decorating a gingerbread man biscuit with buttons. Arrangements for the children's welfare are good. Of particular note is the way the support assistants help and encourage those children who come to school from a range of non-English speaking countries, helping the children to name colours and objects. Both classrooms are busy learning environments. Assessments are ongoing and used to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. Parents make an important contribution by adding notes into the children's record folders. The children have the opportunity to develop skills in a wide range of exciting activities, for example drawing a picture of a pineapple or making a sandwich with egg and cress. Teaching, including that from support staff is good. Children are given very focused activities, tailored to their needs, as well as opportunities to initiate their own learning. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 so that they match the above average standards in other subjects.
- Improve the achievement of more able pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Ensure that in all lessons the learning objectives are shared with pupils and more able pupils are sufficiently challenged.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

After the good start pupils make in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. This is due to the consistently good quality of teaching they receive and the outstanding support the school provides. As a result they reach overall standards that are above the national average by the end of Year 2. This trend has been sustained for the last three years and is reflected in the unvalidated teacher assessments for 2008. However, fewer pupils reach the higher levels of attainment compared with the national average, particularly in writing, and inspection evidence shows that current standards in writing are only just at the expected level. Progress in Key Stage 2 is good. Provisional data for the tests taken by Year 6 pupils in 2008 reflect standards in English, mathematics and science that are generally above those expected for pupils this age. However, writing was the least successful area in 2008, with just over half the pupils making good progress, whereas in reading almost all pupils made good progress. Performance in science was particularly strong. The school's data show that those pupils who have remained at Key Stage 2 for the full four years made the most progress. The school sets challenging targets, which enables most pupils to do as well as they can. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good overall but there is a small number of boys who find behaving well difficult. The school has used short exclusions successfully to help these pupils understand that their behaviour is not acceptable. Attitudes to work are good, most pupils enjoy school and have good relationships with each other and with adults. The school works hard to improve pupils' confidence and belief in their own abilities. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are aware of their own culture and community, and their appreciation of schools with which they have an active link in this country and internationally is strong. Pupils demonstrate a very clear willingness to adopt healthy lifestyles. The popularity of the healthy choices available in the canteen shows this, as does the good uptake of sports and other physical activities. Pupils know how to act safely. For example a Year 2 class was able to safely put away equipment after a physical education lesson in the hall. There is a very effective school council, which is influential in helping the school make important decisions such as the appointment of the current headteacher. Pupils readily take on responsibilities, like taking the lead in the daily 'shake and wake' sessions. All of these activities help to prepare pupils for adult life, as do the good standards they achieve in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good with some examples of outstanding practice. The best lessons are carefully planned with a structure that allows pupils to understand the progress they make towards the learning objectives. In these lessons teachers refer to the learning objectives or steps to success constantly so that the pace of learning is brisk and purposeful. Pupils are fully engaged in what is happening and are confident enough to contribute as active participants. For example, in an outstanding Year 1 lesson, pupils were developing literacy skills by engaging in a variety of activities, including sequencing sentences and role-play, to understand the structure, setting and characters in the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'. In satisfactory lessons, the learning is not as tightly organised. The purpose of activities is not always made clear enough to pupils and this slows their progress and limits their learning. Marking and feedback to pupils about their work are generally thorough and helpful, enabling pupils to understand how to improve.

Questioning is often challenging and helpful, although opportunities to extend the understanding of the most able pupils are sometimes missed. Assessment is used effectively to inform planning for learning and ensures the good progress of most pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is securely based in the heart of the community. It is designed to enable pupils to celebrate the achievement of local heroes and to gain an understanding of the development and ethos of the locality. It is built around the themes of well-being, enterprise and culture. The basic skills of English, mathematics and science are promoted well and this enables the

pupils to learn and make good progress. The curriculum is enriched by educational visits into the local community of Gorton and by visitors to the school who talk about important times in the past. This helps pupils to celebrate the locality they live in, understand their place in the local community and supports the development of their confidence and self-esteem. This innovative curriculum continues to develop, yet has already had a powerful and positive impact on pupils' development. Recent evaluations of the curriculum show improved attitudes to learning and improved reading skills. The well-being of pupils is very well promoted through the very popular 'Calm Spaces' initiative. Here, pupils are taught how to help others and relieve stressful situations through discussion, problem solving and even massage. There is a wide range of extra-curricular provision including musical, dramatic and sporting activities. The school's wide community links support the delivery of these. Provision for ICT is strong. The needs of all pupils with English as an additional language are addressed effectively.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school is active in its support for pupils and particularly in its care for vulnerable pupils. Pupils are helped to recognise that some find it hard to behave well but say that while there is some bullying they know that adults will listen when they need help. Those pupils who are at risk of exclusion are supported well so that they learn how to behave more appropriately. Child protection and safeguarding procedures meet government requirements. Regular health and safety checks are undertaken and risk assessments are in place. Good procedures are in place to welcome children into the Nursery and support is carefully tailored to meet individual needs. Outstanding communications with parents allow those who are new, including those from other countries, to be welcomed into the school community. Transition arrangements between the key stages and to ensure a smooth transition into secondary school are thorough and effective. Target setting and tracking of pupils' progress is mostly very thorough so that pupils and teachers are very clear about the next steps of learning and what pupils need to do to improve further. Attendance is monitored carefully and the school is active in promoting better attendance. This has led to a steadily improving trend in recent years.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management have secured good outcomes, including standards of pupils' attainment and personal well-being. Equality is actively promoted and discrimination eliminated. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has a very clear vision of how the school can best serve its community. Other staff, including a group of middle leaders, have helped put this provision into practice and secure improvements. The role of other middle managers is developing successfully and they are now playing an effective part in the school's development. Relatively inexperienced staff are being supported in taking on responsibilities and a number of support staff, including some parents, are being helped to develop their skills. There is a robust process for self-evaluation and a common understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Staff work as a team to bring about change, regularly monitoring and evaluating how much progress has been made. The governors have a clear understanding of where the school is and how it is progressing. They provide good challenge and support for the headteacher and help promote community cohesion well. The school's

strong community bias has assisted this greatly, as have its links with other schools locally, nationally and internationally.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ 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 |

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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 1 |
| 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 | 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? | 1 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 |

Leadership and management

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| 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**

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We were very impressed with your work and behaviour and judged Aspinal to be a good school with some outstanding features. Some of the things we judged to be exceptionally good were:

- the interesting work you do, particularly the links with the local community. For example, the visitors from Gorton you had in to talk about the Second World War
- the outstanding care and support you are given by your teachers and support staff
- your very good awareness of how to keep healthy and stay safe.

We have asked your school to do three things to make it even better. These are:

- to make sure that your writing skills improve
- to ensure that those of you who learn new things quickly achieve as well as you can
- to make sure that in all lessons teachers make you aware of what it is you should be learning.

By working hard and behaving properly you can help to make Aspinal an even better school.

Keep enjoying school.