

# Plymouth Grove Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105443
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	324223
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Denise Shields

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)	339
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Leaver
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Patrick Cantillon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 June 2006
<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>	Plymouth Grove West Chorlton-on-Medlock Manchester Lancashire M13 0AQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2731453
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2743126

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. It serves an area that has significant levels of social disadvantage. An extremely high proportion of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Almost two thirds of these have English as an additional language, with a third at an early stage of learning English. A very small proportion of pupils are of White British heritage. Over half of all pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below average. A Nursery and two Reception Classes form the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The school has gained the Healthy School's Silver and Activemark 2008 awards.

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in the senior leadership. The school was without a substantive headteacher for six months and was led by an acting headteacher appointed by the local authority during this time. A new headteacher and new deputy headteacher have recently been appointed.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Plymouth Grove is a satisfactory school. It is caring, happy and friendly and is on track to improve further. This is because the headteacher has a very clear vision for the school's future, and ably assisted by his deputy headteacher, is determined to improve the rate of pupils' progress, secure the best possible opportunities for all pupils to broaden their horizons and lift their aspirations. School self-evaluation is developing well and so priorities for improvement are correct. Firm action has been taken to introduce new systems and programmes to bring about improvement, but many initiatives are at an early stage of development and their impact is yet to be seen in national assessment and test results and improved achievement in all classes. Nevertheless, success is already evident. For example, the school recognised that achievement in reading and writing in all classes was not as good as it should be and was holding back pupils' progress in other subjects. Clear and successful initiatives, introduced to deal with this have been effective. Inspection evidence and school data shows that standards in reading and writing have risen throughout the school and pupils' progress is speeding up. Some of the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been dealt with well. Recent developments are starting to improve the quality of provision and pupils' achievements. This demonstrates that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Children enter the Nursery Year with skills that are low for their age, and very low in personal and social skills and language and communication. Achievement across the school is satisfactory overall. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, they reach standards that are broadly average. Although there are clear signs that pupils' achievement in reading and writing is improving in all year groups, it is not as good as it should be in mathematics. As a result, by the end of Year 6 standards in mathematics are below average.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory overall, but is uneven as they move through the school because the quality of teaching and learning are inconsistent. In some lessons teaching is adept at accelerating the rate at which pupils learn. However, not all teaching shows the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This holds back pupils' learning over time. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress in lessons. The progress made by Pakistani pupils is slightly stronger because of the specialist bilingual support in their first language that is used well to help them learn. However, the lack of specialist bilingual support for other ethnic groups, for example, Somali pupils, means that their progress is slightly weaker.

The inclusion of all pupils, whatever their background, is given high priority. Relationships are strong and pupils have a good awareness that they should respect people's differences. Community cohesion is satisfactory with strengths within the school's community, but with more to be done to extend pupils' understanding of national and global communities. The school's growing partnerships with a range of organisations have a positive impact on pupils' all-round education and ensure that good support is provided for pupils and their families. Care for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is sensitive. Pupils say there is always someone to turn to for help. There is a good focus on personal, social, emotional and health education. As a consequence, behaviour is good as is pupils' understanding of safe and healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in the national awards the school has received. Pupils enjoy school and appreciate the good range of activities outside lessons. These enhance pupils' learning and boost their confidence and self-esteem.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children achieve well because of good teaching. By the time they transfer to Year 1 many children's skills are in line with expectations for their age in nearly all areas of learning and a few exceed them. The welfare of children is promoted well.

Classrooms are safe, happy and secure learning areas. Key workers are fundamental in forging trusting relationships with children. They take time to get to know each child and, as a result, children trust them and settle to new routines quickly. The school works well with parents. The strong partnership is established through the specially arranged home visits, which take place before children start school. Communication with parents and children, who are at an early stage of learning English, is fostered well by the good support provided by the bilingual teacher and teaching assistant. A close check is kept on how well children are doing and this contributes well to a broad picture of children's development and achievement. Children's behaviour is good. They play and cooperate sensibly and are happy and enthusiastic about learning. The curriculum is good overall. Early reading, writing and numeracy skills are given high priority and are taught effectively. Effective support and teaching by the bilingual assistants enable children who are at an early stage of learning English to make the same good rate of progress as their friends. A good range of activities is planned, either led by an adult or activities that children can choose for themselves. Staff work hard to make the best use of the outdoor areas, which are uninspiring and restrict the opportunities children have to extend their skills outside. This holds back their independence. The school is fully aware of this and has very firm plans in place to address this. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Leaders have an accurate view of what needs to be done next and clear plans to develop the phase further. Staff work well together as a team.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve achievement in mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve teaching and learning so that teachers have high expectations in all classes, enabling all pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Provide additional specialist bilingual support in all classes, enabling all pupils who are at an early stage of learning English to make the same rate of progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

School data and inspection evidence indicate that, compared with previous years, standards in all year groups in reading and writing have improved this year. By the end of Year 6, standards are now average overall. In recent years, overall standards fell to below average by the end of Year 6 and pupils did not achieve as well as they had previously. Staffing changes were a contributory factor to this picture. However, because self-evaluation is improving the school has an accurate picture of what needs to be done to raise standards and is taking effective steps to do so. The school is aware that a very high proportion of pupils need to be better equipped with reading and writing skills to enable them to make greater progress in other

subjects. It has introduced several successful programmes to boost pupils' performance in these areas. Throughout the school, achievement and standards in mathematics are not as strong as in other subjects and standards are below average.

Achievement is satisfactory for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This is due to the sensitive support and guidance from teaching assistants that enables them to take small, but measurable steps in their learning. While achievement is satisfactory, overall, for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, it is slightly stronger for Pakistani pupils than other ethnic groups. This is because they receive well targeted support from adults who are fluent in Urdu. The lack of specialist bilingual support in other languages means that for other ethnic groups achievement is slightly weaker.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good. They have a good understanding of the wide range of cultures and traditions represented within the school. Their understanding of modern English culture and wider global awareness is developing. Pupils have good social and moral values and demonstrate this by their generosity in supporting national and global charities. They make a good contribution to the school community through the school council and as playground buddies. The contribution they make to the wider community is growing. Pupils enjoy learning and cooperate with each other well. 'School is fun and there are lots of opportunities to learn something new' is a typical view. Although attendance has improved since the previous inspection it is below average. The school's good emphasis on developing pupils' social, emotional and personal well-being prepares them well for life beyond school. Average standards overall in basic skills give pupils a sound start to their secondary education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While the proportion of good teaching is increasing, the consistently good quality of teaching and learning that the school is striving for has not yet been achieved. Good pace and skilful use of questions to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding are features of many lessons. Strategies to accelerate pupils' learning, for example, talking together in pairs or small groups feature in some lessons. In the best lessons, teaching shows high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Work is tailored sharply to individual's abilities and so pupils work enthusiastically and learning is brisk. However, expectations are not always high enough, lesson introductions are too lengthy and work set is sometimes unchallenging. As a result, learning slows. In some pupils' books the presentation of work is poor. Pupils respond well where imaginative use is made of new technology, but this is not consistent practice in all classes. Where teaching assistants work closely with teachers they make a good contribution to improving the progress of those pupils who find learning more difficult, but this is not a feature of all lessons. At its best, marking is helpful and constructive and clearly pinpoints what pupils need to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is not always planned and delivered in such a way as to enable pupils to apply the skills learnt in one subject to another. The recent focus on programmes to teach the basic skills of literacy is helping to lift standards throughout the school, but there are still too few opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in other subjects. Planning to develop numeracy skills is inconsistent. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is well planned and pupils say they thoroughly enjoy using new technology. There is a good personal, social, emotional and health education programme. This is a key factor in helping pupils to keep safe, stay healthy and in promoting their good personal development. There are strengths in the creative curriculum with a strong emphasis on art and music. This promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence well. The curriculum is adapted well for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but the provision made for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English is not effective enough for all groups of pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Levels of care and support are good. Adults know the pupils very well and this does much to ensure that each child is safe, happy and ready to learn. Child protection arrangements and those to safeguard pupils meet current government requirements. Health, safety and welfare arrangements are well established. The Parent Family Worker works very closely with families to promote relationships, to encourage them to support their children's education and to clarify the importance of regular attendance. The Learning Mentor works sensitively with individual pupils to promote their self-confidence, to support them when they experience difficulties in their lives and to aid others to develop self-discipline, if they have difficulty controlling their behaviour. Recently, efforts to improve attendance have been vigorously strengthened. Very robust systems to ensure regular attendance are constantly reviewed and revised, but despite the school's strenuous attempts, a significant minority of families does not respond. The use of pupils' learning targets to help them improve their work is not a consistent feature in all classes. Ways of involving pupils in assessing their own progress are not always used in all lessons.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher bring different strengths to the leadership and management of the school and complement each other well. They work together effectively as a team and have a clear view of the school's performance now and the changes that need to be made to secure future improvement. The assessment of the school's strengths and weaknesses is developing well and now involves all stakeholders. School improvement planning is becoming more closely aligned to the findings. A rigorous system to track and monitor pupils' progress is now in place so that underachievement can be quickly identified and tackled. The school now makes good use of challenging targets to help raise standards. However, it is too soon for these arrangements to have had a measurable impact on achievement and standards. Arrangements to train and develop staff are good and the impact can be seen in the revised approaches to teaching reading and writing and the improved standards throughout the school.

Subject leaders' roles are developing well. Governors provide effective support, are not afraid to ask challenging questions and are becoming more involved in helping to set priorities for improvement. The school works well with a growing range of external agencies, schools and community groups. There are firm plans to develop partnerships further, when the building of a parent and community room in the school grounds, is completed.



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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?	3
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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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

**Achievement and standards**

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

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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	3
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>	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 Plymouth Grove Primary School, Manchester, M13 0AQ

Thank you for helping with the inspection of your school by talking about your work and the many activities you take part in. You were very helpful, polite and friendly. I thoroughly enjoyed my short time with you.

Plymouth Grove is a satisfactory school and it is improving and I know you are proud of it. These are some of the things I found out.

- Adults take good care of you and help you to stay safe and healthy.
- You try hard with your work and enjoy learning.
- The progress you make by Year 6 in reading and writing is speeding up because your headteacher has introduced lots of plans and projects to help you learn more quickly.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a good start to their education.
- There are lots of after-school clubs, visits and visitors to the school, which you told me you enjoyed.

To make your school even better I have asked your headteacher and governors to make sure that you do better in mathematics, this is because your achievement is not as good as it is in reading and writing. Although you told me that many of your lessons are fun, I have also asked your teachers to make sure you learn as well as you can in all your lessons. As many of you are only just starting to learn to speak the English language, I have asked your school to provide more adults, in all classes, who are able to talk to you both in English and the language you speak at home. This will help you to learn at faster pace.

Thank you once again for being so friendly.