

Ashbury Meadow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133770
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	328759
Inspection dates	8–9 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Steve Rigby

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	190
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	Mrs J Hersey
Headteacher	Mrs Lorna Rushton
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Rylance Street Beswick Manchester M11 3NA
Telephone number	0161 219 6630
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than average and serves a culturally diverse population close to Manchester city centre. The school is in an area of regeneration and social change with a high number of pupils starting and leaving the school other than at the usual time. Many families experience considerable social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is well above average. The school has a growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups and a higher than average proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school shares its site with a Sure Start Children's Centre with whom it has strong links. The school has achieved the nationally recognised Healthy Schools Silver Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school that cares well for pupils' social and emotional needs and successfully promotes their personal development and well-being. Parents express overwhelming support for the school's efforts, including the high levels of pastoral support their children receive.

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children start school with exceptionally low levels of knowledge and skill. Standards have been improving year-on-year although, by the end of Year 6, they remain below average in English, mathematics and science. Many pupils stay at the school for a relatively short space of time and others join part way through their schooling. This has a harmful effect on the continuity of their learning and hence impacts negatively on standards, even though the school is effective in supporting these pupils to settle and do their best. Inspection evidence confirms the improvement in standards, which is as a result of a more stable staff team who are now consistently enabling the pupils' progress to accelerate. This is particularly clear for those pupils who have been at the school for a whole key stage, who make at least satisfactory and sometimes better progress to reach realistic targets. Effective pastoral support is providing pupils with a sound basis to help them speed up their progress. Even so, the school recognises that standards in English, mathematics and science need to be higher. The school helps vulnerable pupils, many of whom have significant barriers to learning, to try to overcome their difficulties in order to gain the most from their learning.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved and is good overall. A greater stability in the staff team now ensures that good lesson planning allows a closer match of work to meet individual pupils' needs and, as a result, progress is accelerating. Pupils who find learning difficult are supported effectively, as are those who are in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language. This is because they receive particularly well targeted support and their progress is closely monitored. As a result, these groups of pupils make satisfactory progress.

The care and support pupils receive is good. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. However, the academic guidance provided for them does not enable pupils to be involved in assessing their own work and, consequently, they are not always aware of their next steps in learning.

Pupils' personal development, including their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, is good. Behaviour throughout the school is good and reflects the hard work and clear and consistent approach of staff. As a result pupils are willing to work hard and try to do their best. Attendance is satisfactory, following the determined efforts of the school in encouraging families to appreciate the importance of regular attendance and punctuality. Pupils show a good appreciation of healthy lifestyles and enjoy taking part in their daily exercise programmes.

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities. Due to the low starting points of many pupils and the numbers who do not reach the nationally expected levels at the end of the Reception year, the school recognises the need for a careful transition into Key Stage 1. However, the curriculum in Year 1, at present, is not sufficiently tailored to fully meet the needs of this particular group of pupils. The school is part of a curriculum network working with a local cluster of schools in promoting 'Curriculum within the Community'. This encourages pupils to explore their local community and appreciate what it has to offer.

The leadership and management of the school are good and positive relationships with parents and the local community have been developed. The headteacher and senior managers have

brought rigour to the way in which the school evaluates its work and identifies areas for further improvement. The school has developed a clear vision and there has been a quickening of the pace of school improvement. Shared management has been encouraged and developed, allowing subject leaders to make a positive contribution to the school's work. Governors are supportive of the school although many are new in post and are in the process of developing the expertise required to become critical and challenging friends to the school.

Overall, taking into account the impact of school leadership, as seen in pupils' improving progress and the strengthening of teaching and learning, the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) with attainment that is exceptionally low, especially in their communication skills. By the time they leave the EYFS, although they have made good progress, most are still at levels below those expected for children of their age. The EYFS is well led and managed. An accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses is achieved through regular team meetings, shared planning, training and a thorough approach to assessment.

A warm welcome awaits parents and children every morning, enabling both staff and parents to share concerns or celebrations. Parents are well informed about their children's progress throughout the year. The emphasis on improving children's communication and language development enables them to widen their vocabulary. Writing opportunities are well planned and integrated across all areas of learning. Good listening and thinking skills are encouraged early and promoted throughout the children's learning experiences. The indoor spaces are well set out with suitable equipment, enabling children to become enthusiastically engaged in activities which reflect the full range of the early years' curriculum.

The children are able to demonstrate a growing ability to take responsibility by selecting their own activities and tidying up carefully when they have finished. All the children are able to concentrate and engage in sustaining learning, either by themselves, with other children or with adults. The children are very well behaved and they respond well to clear expectations and the appropriate use of praise.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Ensure that the curriculum in Year 1 is tailored to fully meet the needs of all pupils so that they make the best possible progress from their starting points.
- Ensure that pupils are involved in assessing their own work so that they are clear about their next steps in learning.

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

Children start school with exceptionally low levels of skill, particularly in language and in personal and social development. They make satisfactory progress overall, although progress is now

accelerating throughout the school as a result of effective measures taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning. As a result standards in English, mathematics and science are rising. This is particularly evident in the current Year 6 cohort and for those pupils who have been at the school for an extended period of time. However, the school recognises that work remains to be done to improve standards further.

In 2008, standards at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally low in reading, mathematics and writing. At the end of Year 6 they were also low in English, mathematics and science. Both of these year groups of pupils had experienced very high levels of pupil mobility and had high numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or other complex social problems. These significant barriers to learning impacted upon their end of key stage standards, although performance data shows that their achievement was satisfactory overall. However, standards are now improving because of the good impact of teaching on pupils' progress and the effectiveness of the school's leadership in ensuring that any underachievement is swiftly identified and addressed.

Achievement observed during the inspection was always at least satisfactory and on occasions better, highlighting the quickening pace of progress within the school. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are benefiting from a range of support programmes and focus groups and this additional help and support is enabling this group of pupils to make satisfactory progress. The achievement of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory as is the achievement of the growing number of pupils from minority ethnic groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Positive and well established approaches to managing behaviour create an orderly and calm environment. The school community is strong and positive with good relationships in evidence. There are clear systems and opportunities for those pupils wishing to make their concerns known. The school council were able to discuss the 'Every Child Matters' agenda knowledgeably and feel that they can make a difference to the daily organisation of their school. Duties are taken seriously, for example, the responsibility for organising the hall, they reflected that this enabled them to see that, 'We can be trusted and have a go' giving them positive self-esteem.

The Sure Start Children's Centre and school have a strong partnership that increases opportunities for the school to communicate with parents. This has been important in improving attendance and punctuality, which are now satisfactory. This is having a positive impact on learning.

Pupils enjoy their healthy lunches and have an awareness of healthy lifestyles and the importance of physical activity. Parents commented that cooking activities during 'Golden Time' often resulted in pupils bringing recipes home, which they viewed in a very positive light. The pupils have an appreciation of other cultures and celebrate the diversity of their own community, for example, through celebrating the Chinese New Year. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future economic well-being as they explore the wider world of work through the 'Higher Futures for You' programme as well as learning to work together and follow instructions within their classrooms.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The good quality of teaching, which has come with the greater stability in staffing, is a significant factor in the improving rate of progress evident across the school. The lessons observed during the inspection, evidence gathered from scrutinising pupils' work and careful analysis of data show that teaching is having a good impact on pupils' learning and hence is helping to accelerate their progress. This is now becoming evident also in improved standards. Classes are well managed and good relationships between staff and pupils are very much in evidence. Pupils' behaviour is managed well so that no time is lost and lessons are productive. Teachers have an increasing knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment and rates of progress. This allows them to plan effectively to provide work that is appropriate for all groups of pupils. These strengths result in a good rate of progress in most lessons and are becoming evident in the accelerated rate of progress pupils are making over longer periods of time. In most lessons the pace of learning is good and this maintains high levels of interest amongst all the pupils. A good use of questioning helps and encourages pupils to remember previous learning. Pupils are encouraged to share and discuss their ideas. This approach not only fosters the development of speaking and listening skills, it also enables teachers to ensure answering questions leads to raised self-esteem amongst pupils. The school deploys teaching assistants well and they make a positive contribution to the focus groups they work with. However, they sometimes remain too passive and are not sufficiently involved in whole class discussions.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Overall the curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of the pupils. It focuses with increasing effect on reinforcing key skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) and linking them to other subjects. However, the curriculum for the pupils in Year 1 is not always appropriate for their needs as it does not sufficiently take into account their levels of attainment at the start of that year. Consequently, some of the work set for them is too difficult and does not sufficiently recognise their stage of development. The school works closely with external providers, the local schools network and its parents to good effect. Pupils with individual educational and personal needs have had a range of successful initiatives introduced to support them. Numerous visits, extra-curricular activities and visiting speakers all add to the quality of learning, raise pupils' self-esteem and channel their energies into increased levels of engagement, interest and productivity.

A well thought out programme of personal, social, health and citizenship is reflected in the Healthy Schools programme and the high profile of physical exercise is well established throughout the school. The global dimension of the school's work is being developed through links with a Chinese and a Spanish school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school meets current government requirements for safeguarding its pupils. Procedures are reviewed regularly and all risks are appropriately assessed. The pastoral support provided by the school is one of its strengths, giving effective counselling and support for its most vulnerable

pupils. For some pupils, for example, looked-after children and those who speak English as an additional language, their specific needs are quickly identified and effective arrangements to meet them are in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated into the school community.

Academic support and guidance is satisfactory. There are rigorous procedures for the assessing of pupils' work and the setting of targets, although pupils are insufficiently involved in this process and are not aware of what they need to learn next to improve their work. Pupils are starting to develop as independent learners, appreciating the value of collaborative work with opportunities for understanding the wider world through play and work within the local community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and senior leaders work well as a team, successfully promoting strong pastoral care and guidance and equality of opportunity in this fully inclusive school. They are working closely and successfully with staff and in partnership with the local authority to improve pupils' achievement and raise standards. Targets set are realistic and pupils' progress is regularly monitored and discussed with the relevant staff.

The good quality of leadership and management is leading to improvements in standards and achievement. Rigorous evaluation of performance has led to accurate analysis of data to identify any areas of underachievement and the school is addressing these through a comprehensive and well focused school improvement plan. In turn, this is enabling teaching to accelerate pupils' progress. The process of sharing management responsibilities is effective, with middle managers encouraged to take responsibility for their own aspects of school improvement.

The school works closely with its parents and its community, promoting community cohesion well. For example, training courses, through the Sure Start Children's Centre, developing parental support for their children's learning are popular. Parents value the opportunities provided to be involved in the life of the school. In addition, links with Spanish and Chinese schools have been reflected in the cultural work and introduction of a modern foreign language in the school.

The governing body supports the school and involves itself in its work, particularly through its chair. It is well informed by the headteacher as to school priorities.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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	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

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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	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**

I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we recently inspected your school. We enjoyed the time we spent with you, talking to you and helping us find out about your school. You showed good manners towards one another and the adults in your school. You work well together and we watched you carry out your jobs, which help to make your school such a pleasant place.

Your school is satisfactory and improving. Those who lead the school and the other adults within it make sure you are well cared for and safe. You are clearly happy in school and your improving attendance, punctuality and good behaviour helps you learn. Your headteacher and teachers want you to do as well as you can and to help you all achieve this we have asked them to make sure that:

- standards in English, mathematics and science continue to rise throughout the school
- the way you learn in Year 1 is as helpful as possible for all pupils, so that work is not too hard and everyone makes the best possible progress
- all pupils are involved in checking their own work so that you are really clear about next steps in your learning.

We know the staff will help you all they can but you can play your part by making sure that you continue to work hard, behave well and come to school on time everyday.