

Medlock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105483
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	336501
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2010
Reporting inspector	David Scott

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Morris
Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Maguire
Date of previous school inspection	25 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 23 part-lessons, observed all 16 class teachers and had meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors did not hold meetings with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation documentation, monitoring and assessment information, lesson plans, school policies and analysed 69 questionnaires from parents and carers, 116 from pupils and 21 from staff. The school's safeguarding procedures were also evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of quality of learning in lessons on pupils' attainment
- how well the school is using assessment data to secure improvement for all groups of pupils
- the provision for more able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of leaders and managers, at all levels, on driving improvements across all key stages
- the steps the school is taking to improve attendance and how successful they have been.

Information about the school

Medlock Primary is a larger than average school. Almost half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, with almost one fifth being at the early stages of learning English. Eight out of ten pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups; the largest of these groups being any other ethnic group and Black African. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Just under one in five pupils, a proportion similar to that found nationally, have special educational needs and/or disabilities, the largest group being those with specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils who join the school at times other than the usual starting points is much higher than that found nationally. During the recent past the school has experienced difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff, but staffing is now stable.

In 2008 the school, together with a new children's centre, moved into a state-of-the-art building on the same site, which provides an integrated holistic 'learning journey' for children from 0–11 years old.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils, but one that is improving under the positive leadership of the headteacher. The school is a welcoming and harmonious community. Pupils feel happy and safe and make sound academic progress. They behave well, respect the views of others and have a well-developed sense of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. Good pastoral support and guidance, especially for the pupils and their families who are experiencing difficulties, make a strong contribution to the school's improving relationships with parents and carers.

The school faces exceptionally challenging circumstances due to the high levels of mobility of pupils throughout the year. Over the years, this has had a significant impact on attainment. Progress and learning are improving securely as is pupils' enjoyment of learning. Those pupils who attend Medlock from Year 1 through to Year 6 make good progress. Pupils who join the school at unexpected times are well supported, so that they make satisfactory progress. However, many do not reach average levels of attainment due to interruptions in learning, emotional difficulties or because they sometimes arrive understanding and speaking little or no English. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language also do as well as their peers because of good support and one-to-one tuition.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good practice, but the quality across the school is variable. This is because activities are not always closely matched to the pupils' varied needs. Leaders also know that there are examples of good assessment practice, although the quality across the school is variable. Teachers' skills in asking probing questions are not sufficiently well developed. This limits the opportunities pupils have to develop and explain their ideas and prevents them, particularly the more able, from making consistently good or better progress.

Despite sound teaching, a sound curriculum and good care and support, not all pupils attend regularly. The school has worked assiduously to improve attendance, which is broadly average. Nevertheless, there are families who do not observe the school's holiday dates.

Leaders have brought about many improvements following honest and accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance. Nevertheless, some leaders are new in post and the school recognises that further training and coaching is necessary to help them become more effective in raising standards. Since the last inspection the school has begun to raise attainment, and has reduced exclusions and improved overall attendance. These actions demonstrate that the school has satisfactory capacity to make the further

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improvements that are needed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and progress pupils make, so that they are consistently good, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use day-to-day assessments to provide activities that are challenging and are carefully matched to the varied needs of all pupils
 - asking probing questions in lessons which give pupils, especially the more able, opportunities to develop and explain their ideas fully
 - reviewing targets more systematically with pupils so they clearly understand how to improve.
- Improve the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on the school's improvement in raising attainment by:
 - ensuring that good practice is shared more consistently across the school
 - working more closely with families to secure their commitment to improving attendance
 - extending the capacity of leaders and governors still further to manage their areas of responsibility through coaching and training.
- About 40% of the school's whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The quality of learning and progress in lessons is satisfactory. Pupils behave well, and develop into polite, thoughtful and considerate young people. The overwhelming majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their tasks and respond appropriately to teachers' requests. Year 4 pupils, for example, thoroughly enjoyed their literacy lesson where they had to identify the features of a film script by acting out the various roles associated with film making. This led to a lively discussion where pupils, and in particular boys, made good progress in their understanding of giving clear stage directions. In Year 2, pupils thoroughly enjoyed their numeracy lesson where they were working on different activities involving number patterns. The activities successfully developed their problem-solving skills.

Standards pupils reach by the time they leave are improving, particularly in English, but are still low. This is largely because many have not had the benefit of being in the school from the normal starting point. From well below average starting points when they enter the school, pupils achieve satisfactorily. Progress accelerates the longer pupils remain in the school and initiatives such as Every Child a Reader and one-to-one tuition are helping small groups and individual pupils, who are behind in their progress, to make up lost ground. The school's tracking shows that those who remain in the

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school from Year 1 to Year 6 make good progress.

Pupils get on well together and are keen to engage in the many opportunities to take on responsibilities. They are proud to be school council members as they were elected following 'real-life' election procedures. They have also been very involved in suggesting improvements to the attractive playground areas. Pupils are aware of the world of work and most are soundly prepared for their futures. They participate in sustainability and recycling projects and have recently formed an eco committee. The school has worked hard both with pupils, and parents and carers to emphasise the importance of good attendance. These efforts have had a fair measure of success and have succeeded in raising pupils' attendance, which is broadly average. Nevertheless, too many families still take holidays in term time.

Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and have a mature understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle by participating in sporting pursuits and eating healthily. Medlock instils in its pupils a sense of purpose and self-belief that underpins their good spiritual, moral, cultural and social development. Above all, they enjoy learning; as a group of pupils said, 'We all learn from each other and cooperate well. We love our new school building and we are so lucky to be here.'

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

Pupils experience a range of activities. As a result of effective monitoring, teaching throughout the school is satisfactory with some being good. Pupils who have particular learning needs are well supported in lessons because teaching assistants are generally well deployed. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and subject knowledge is strong so explanations are well structured and confident. New technology is used well to make lessons interesting. Nevertheless, although there are pockets of good practice, marking and target setting do not always 'sign-post' clearly how pupils can improve their work, and questions are not always sufficiently probing, particularly for more-able pupils. Also, occasionally teachers' explanations are too long. This reduces the opportunity for pupils to think for themselves and explain their ideas and progress slows.

The recently introduced themed-based curriculum effectively meets the needs and interests of all pupils. It is further enriched by specialist sports coaches, guest speakers, dance, drama and music extravaganzas and clubs ranging from knitting to yoga. A range of trips and visits, including the annual residential for pupils in Years 5 and 6, provide good opportunities for pupils to broaden their personal and academic skills. However, senior staff acknowledge the need to extend the provision of popular extra-curricular activities, trips and visits in order to consolidate learning inside the classroom still further.

The school is rightly proud of its good care, guidance and support. The most vulnerable pupils benefit greatly from the school's good links with external agencies. Staff can point to real successes in helping pupils overcome difficult histories and challenging episodes in their lives. The inclusion team provides a wide range of support to enable vulnerable pupils and is increasingly successful at engaging with families whose circumstances make them hard to reach.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Despite the many challenges and changes of staff in the recent past that have interrupted progress, the determination and commitment of the headteacher to improve the school is unwavering. She has established a new leadership team with clear lines of responsibility which is focused on raising attainment. This has been effectively shared

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with all staff. She has taken energetic action to eradicate unsatisfactory teaching through a rigorous programme of lesson observations and evaluation as well as staff training. A programme of support from local authority consultants, in-house coaching, and collaboration with staff from the partner schools, are helping to improve teaching. As a result, progress and learning are beginning to accelerate. A number of leaders are newly appointed to the school or are new to their responsibilities. Although 'green shoots' are beginning to emerge, it is still too early to assess their full impact.

The school has a strong commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equal chance to learn. Senior leaders guide staff so that equality of opportunity and inclusion are sound, but recognise that occasionally, although their attainment is improving, the most able pupils do not do as well as other groups of pupils. Governors are supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties and they challenge well over such matters as the building the new school and financial management. However, not all governors have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how good teaching can lead to accelerating pupils' progress.

The school has good procedures for safeguarding and risk assessment. There is a carefully orchestrated approach to managing the safety of pupils both within the school day and in the before- and after-school clubs. The school has good links with the local community, particularly with its three partner secondary schools and a local music college. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has a detailed understanding of its own community and the different faiths, ethnicities and cultures that exist within it. However, it acknowledges the need to develop further partnerships that will improve the pupils' understanding of the wider national and global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They settle in quickly and are keen to learn. Children play together and are well behaved. They enjoy learning in this busy environment. Children start school mostly with skill levels well below those expected for their age. Overall, by the end of the Reception Year, they have made good progress and attain levels that are just below those expected for their age. They make most gains in their language development, personal skills and their ability to recognise numbers. For example, this was demonstrated when the children responded very well by creatively using new technologies such as laptops, digital cameras and floor robots to stimulate their imaginations and develop their understanding of numbers, shapes and space.

Children enjoy a wide range of stimulating activities, indoors and out, carefully chosen to meet their needs and interests. They are given the opportunity to select their own learning activities and respond well to encouragement and praise to explore and widen their choices. This is contributing well to the development of independent learning skills. Teaching is consistently good, with motivating lessons moving at a good pace in a friendly and safe atmosphere. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the leader has a clear vision of how to develop provision and to make it outstanding. She has ensured that all the welfare requirements are met and that children's progress is closely monitored, which contributes to the high-quality care children receive. The school's support for children whose circumstances make them vulnerable is of a high standard. Partnerships with parents and carers, and external agencies are good so that specialist help is sought and provided when needed. Teachers and helpers are highly perceptive, note significant moments of each child's progress and make good use of the 'learning journeys' to communicate with parents and carers. These records are used astutely to ensure that each child's learning is moved speedily forward, with no stress and only joy. Smiles and gentleness abound in this place but great rigour too. The new and attractive outdoor area for Nursery and Reception children permits free-flow movement. Nevertheless, the school acknowledges that it needs to extend the opportunities for learning outdoors in the areas of communication and number skills.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The school enjoys the support of the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires. Almost all respondents were very positive about the school and felt that it keeps pupils safe and helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle. Inspectors agree with these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Medlock Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 435 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	71	19	28	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	43	62	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	70	21	30	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	59	22	32	5	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	41	59	26	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	61	26	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	57	28	41	1	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	29	42	30	43	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	51	28	41	5	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	45	33	48	2	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	52	26	38	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	42	61	24	35	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	67	21	30	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



07 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Medlock Primary School, Manchester, M13 9UJ

This letter is to thank you for welcoming us to Medlock and for taking the time from your breaks to talk to the inspectors. We really enjoyed meeting you and seeing you work and play. Many of your parents and carers wrote to say how pleased and happy they were with the school; as one parent said: 'My children can't wait to get to school. They love it so much.'

We came to find out as much as we could about your school and now we would like to tell you what we found. We feel your school is satisfactory, meaning that it does some things well while other things could be better. Your headteacher and teachers make your school a welcoming place where you feel safe. We were particularly impressed by your brand new school and your attractively designed playground. You are respectful, polite and considerate towards each other. Your headteacher and teachers are determined to help you succeed as are your parents and carers. So we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do these things.

- Plan work that will challenge and engage you in all lessons, by asking more searching questions, particularly for the more able among you.
- Give you clearer advice on how to improve your work so that you can achieve your very best.
- Be more consistent by sharing the good ideas to help you learn throughout the school.
- Make sure you all attend as well as possible. You and your families can help by not taking holidays in term time.

Once again, it was very good to meet you and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

David Scott

Lead inspector

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