



Markland Hill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105159
Local Authority Bolton
Inspection number 287140
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector Margaret Lewis

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

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|---|--------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Markland Hill |
| School category | Community | | Bolton |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 | | Lancashire BL1 5EJ |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01204 332626 |
| Number on roll (school) | 273 | Fax number | 01204 332627 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mr G Fairhurst |
| | | Headteacher | Mrs J Coysh |
| Date of previous school inspection | 19 February 2002 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Markland Hill is a popular and oversubscribed school on the edge of Bolton. It is of average size. Pupils come from generally favourable social and economic backgrounds and a much lower than average proportion of pupils claim free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. All pupils are English speaking and the majority of pupils come from a White British background. The school holds a Basic Skills Award and an award for Investors in People. The school has undergone several changes in staff since the last inspection. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2005.

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

Markland Primary is a good school which provides good value for money. It is a welcoming school where pupils have excellent enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning and behave very well, showing politeness and kindness to others. They particularly enjoy the good opportunities given to them in music and sport, and learn to work cooperatively in a team.

Children receive a positive start to their education with good quality provision in the Reception classes which continues throughout Years 1 and 2 and results in high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 2 standards are significantly above average overall. Given their starting points, this represents good progress over time. Standards are especially high in English and mathematics although standards in science dropped to average in 2006. Progress in science lessons, however, is generally good and pupils are beginning to have more opportunities for practical and investigative work. This provides a good basis for improvement.

Very good relationships across the school, together with the very good care and support they receive, contribute well to pupils' good personal development. The school has a good programme of personal, social and health education which effectively raises pupils' awareness of how to stay safe and adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Good opportunities are being developed to promote older pupils' independent learning skills, such as through the Knowledge Community Network, where older pupils learn to communicate in a variety of ways with pupils in other schools both locally and in Hong Kong. From Reception onwards, pupils make good progress and show confidence and enjoyment in information and communication technology (ICT).

The quality of teaching and learning and the curriculum are good overall. While there has been recent improvement in the assessment of pupils' learning, more needs to be done to ensure that the wealth of good quality assessment information is used consistently by all teachers to improve individual pupils' progress. Pupils are not always aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve.

The vast majority of parents have great confidence in the effectiveness of the school. Parents say that they are impressed by the standard of teaching and level of care which helps their children come on by 'leaps and bounds'.

Leadership and management are good. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, supported by senior staff and governors, a shared commitment to maintain and raise standards further and improve provision has developed. The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate although it graded itself cautiously in one or two respects. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in science and give pupils more opportunities to learn from practical and investigative science activities.

- Make consistent use of assessment information on pupils' progress to determine the next steps in teaching and to ensure that individual pupils know exactly what they need to learn next.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the time they leave the school, pupils reach standards in English and mathematics that are significantly above the national average. This has been a consistent picture for the last four years. Standards in science are not as high as in other subjects because insufficient opportunities are given for investigative work, and consequently pupils sometimes lack confidence during these lessons.

Most children start in the Reception class with attainment that is above the average expected for their ages. They do well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that at the end of Year 2 they reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics. They continue to make good progress in English and mathematics. The school identified that attainment and progress in writing were not as good as in reading and has worked successfully to put strategies in place which are now closing the gap. Consequently, challenging school targets were far exceeded in English in 2006. However, targets for mathematics were missed for higher-attaining pupils and this is now an area of priority. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' enjoyment of the school is reflected in their very good behaviour, above average attendance and enthusiasm for learning. Parents strongly agree that pupils' well-being is good and say their children glow with the encouragement the teachers give. Pupils value opportunities to express their views and are keenly implementing an environmental scheme. Their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good. Pupils show a high level of social responsibility and are justly proud of their efforts to raise money for deserving causes. They have excellent knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle, and the school is working to achieve the Healthy Schools Award. Exceptionally good basic skills in literacy and mathematics help pupils prepare for the world of work, and the school is starting to develop business enterprise schemes to support this. Pupils express their views frequently through a well established school council and have succeeded in bringing about changes. For example, the school council is researching loan schemes to fund recycling bins. Pupils feel safe from bullying, and older pupils say new initiatives such as peer mediators are 'good because you are helping the children to think of a solution'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The calm and yet very busy and purposeful atmosphere in lessons enables pupils to learn successfully and with considerable enjoyment. The teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics is a strength of the school. Groups of pupils who are not quite reaching the levels expected of them in English and mathematics are provided with the necessary support to help them catch up. This works well and helps bring them up to speed. Teaching is particularly good, and often outstanding, at the end of both key stages. Teachers generally have good expertise and secure knowledge of the curriculum. Work provided is usually well matched to pupils' different learning needs. High quality teaching assistants support pupils' learning, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Lessons are planned carefully and good organisation is a feature of most lessons, ensuring that pupils of different ages and abilities are catered for well. For instance, good organisation of pupils in mixed age classes in upper Key Stage 2 often ensures that they are taught as a year group. A good example of this was seen when pupils in Year 6 were taught in two smaller classes set by ability for a science lesson. Teachers are very confident in the use of ICT and make good use in lessons of interactive whiteboards. Careful assessments are made of pupils' learning but the information gathered is not always used well enough to set targets and make pupils aware of what they need to learn next to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum offers all pupils from Reception to Year 6 a wide range of experiences. Meaningful links between subjects are being developed to help pupils see the relevance of what they are learning. Ways are being sought to help pupils learn about finance and the world of work. For example, pupils in Reception visited a local pizza restaurant. They ran their own caf, and dressed up as waiters and waitresses selling and serving refreshments to their parents and teachers.

The school has identified the need for further development of the curriculum for ICT to ensure that pupils are given more opportunities to apply their skills across different subjects. The science curriculum does not offer sufficient opportunities to ensure that pupils successfully learn practical skills of investigation.

A wide range of clubs, after-school activities, visits out and visitors to school, enrich pupils' enjoyment and achievement. These are well supported and appreciated by pupils and parents. Excellent opportunities are given for pupils to engage in sport. Good links with the local high school have added to this provision. Music is a strength of provision. Older pupils learn to play a range of musical instruments. The school has an active I choir and orchestra.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's welcoming atmosphere and good level of concern for individuals by the staff, means that pupils feel safe and valued. Great efforts are made by staff to help all to succeed. Parents are highly delighted with the school and the progress that their children make. They feel that the school is good at getting the best out of their children. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well supported, and older pupils enjoy helping the younger ones, as play leaders or prefects. Arrangements for safeguarding children are in place and health and safety matters are dealt with effectively. Assessment of pupils' academic progress varies across the school and not all pupils are aware of what they need to do better to help them take responsibility for their own learning. Very good home-school relationships enable parents to support their children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, who is very well supported by the senior management team, the school has recently moved forward in many areas. School improvement and self-evaluation have been an important focus and areas for development have been identified with great thoroughness. Inspectors agree with most of the judgements the school has made in its self-evaluation although it has been cautious in some aspects. The headteacher and staff work together effectively as a team and the work of the school strongly reflects their belief in meeting the needs of every pupil. Restructuring of staff, linked to a very good programme of training, has led to improvements in teaching and learning. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors are very supportive and closely involved with the work of the school through regular visits, links to curriculum subjects and aspects of the school's work. They play an active part in forward planning and are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for development.

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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 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

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 disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 2 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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

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|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ 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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 2 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 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 |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know inspectors visited your school recently. We really enjoyed joining your lessons and hearing about the interesting things you do. You told us how much you enjoy coming to school, how well cared for you are, and how safe you feel. We were pleased to hear how the school council helps to improve things and how you all think about making the world a better place by caring for the environment. We were impressed that you know so much about healthy eating and the importance of exercise to keep fit, and choose to do both as much as you can. These are some of the things that your school does well.

- You generally behave very well and get on with each other; people like the play leaders and prefects are very helpful to others.
- You work hard and do better than most schools especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You enjoy school and are enthusiastic about the opportunities you have, such as the clubs, trips and visitors that help you with your learning.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and plan lessons well for all of you so that you learn quickly, and the teaching assistants help you very well.
- The school takes really good care of you.

We have asked the headteacher and staff to make sure that everyone uses the school's assessment and targeting systems well. This will mean that each of you will know exactly what you are doing and what you need to do to reach even higher levels in your work. To help you reach the same high standards in science as you do in English and mathematics, we have asked the teachers to give you more opportunities to do practical and investigative work in science.

Keep up the very good attitudes to learning and continue to work hard and enjoy school. I would like to send you very best wishes for the future.