

Gorton Mount Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105416
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	355772
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Kathryn Gethin HMI

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	509
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Donna Mair
Headteacher	Ms Carol Powell
Date of previous school inspection	14 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. Sixteen teachers were observed over 18 lessons, including a learning walk. Inspectors held meeting with the headteacher, members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence, including the school data about achievement and progress, assessment procedures and questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 74 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well pupils achieve from their starting points, particularly in English and mathematics.
- How well pupils are included in the school, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those from minority-ethnic groups.
- The capacity of leaders and managers to sustain improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. Seventy per cent of pupils are from minority-ethnic groups. Fifty four per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The school has achieved the Gold Healthy School Award and the Financial Management Standards in Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good and improving school that takes excellent care of its pupils in a safe and welcoming environment. Pupils are now making good progress as they are taught well. Some groups make outstanding progress given their well-below average starting points. This is a school that has successfully established a strong sense of team work where staff are motivated and say, 'The children are such a joy to teach.' The school provides a warm and welcoming environment to all pupils and is particularly supportive for those who have experienced trauma in their young lives. School days begin early with a well attended breakfast club and extended after school with a range of sport activities. Parents and carers report they are happy with the education their children receive and pupils say they feel safe and enjoy school.

Behaviour is good throughout the school and pupils welcome visitors warmly and with respect. Attendance is average overall for most pupils due to the successful work between the school and parents and carers.

Pupils' successful learning in lessons is attributable to good teaching based on an effective curriculum. Progress is good overall but variable throughout the school. This is because assessment is not always used successfully to ensure that pupils fully understand the lesson objectives. Where teaching is strongest, the lessons move at a brisk pace and pupils flourish as they direct their own activities. Where teaching is less effective, activities are over-directed leaving little time for pupils to work independently and explore ideas for themselves. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils well and work as one, providing an effective learning environment. The commissioning of therapists has proved invaluable as a means of support for the most vulnerable pupils. Staff have an excellent understanding of the external factors that impact on learning and engagement with parents and carers has been fundamental to the success of the interventions. Emotional literacy is woven throughout the curriculum, where pupils are encouraged to express themselves through writing, conversation and music. As a result pupils are more confident and learn the importance of having respect and taking responsibility.

The headteacher, supported effectively by the senior leadership team and staff, puts the safeguarding of pupils' health, safety and well-being as a top priority. Excellent care, guidance and support mean that pupils are well cared for. Safeguarding procedures and processes are excellent. As a result pupils feel safe and secure and able to concentrate on learning. The determination of the headteacher and senior managers to drive improvement is evident throughout the school. Motivation is strong; there is equality for all and a strong sense of shared purpose. The school is fully supported by the governing body, has an accurate analysis of areas to improve and there is a total absence of complacency. Therefore the capacity to improve is good and the school provides good value for money.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better lessons by:
 - using the school's robust assessment procedures to ensure pupils are actively engaged in their learning
 - giving more opportunity for pupils to self-evaluate their work
 - ensuring teaching meets individual learning needs and teaches pupils in the way they learn best.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school with skills that are well-below those that are typical for their age. In addition, mobility within the school is extremely high. In the current Year 6 only 25% of pupils have attended school from Reception and 75% of pupils live in difficult circumstances. Despite these barriers, pupils' current work, as well as the test results for 2010, shows that while their attainment is low, the current progress made is good. A notable success has been that in English and mathematics, across the school, 74% of pupils are at national average. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or learning disabilities, some of which are complex, receive external support from a wide range of agencies. As a consequence, they make good progress, with some groups making outstanding progress as they move through the school to Year 6.

Pupils are keen, enthusiastic and enjoy their lessons. Some pupils are not naturally well behaved and face numerous challenges outside school. In school, they behave well and this is a considerable achievement. For instance, in Year 6, pupils empathised with characters from the Titanic and demonstrated good ability to express their views with confidence and understanding of the social impact. They listened attentively to others, contributed where appropriate, showed respect for other views and worked collaboratively. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They enjoy having friends and are confident that teachers will deal swiftly with any problems. They are aware of the inherent dangers of internet sites and would approach the school counsellor if they had concerns. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and recognise the importance of a good diet and exercise to optimise learning. Healthy snacks are provided and include carrots, bananas and tomatoes. Pupils enjoy the wide range of sport activities provided, including football, hockey and swimming, and deserve their Healthy School Award.

Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities such as librarians and for recycling. They take these roles seriously. They show a strong social conscience by raising money for charities both locally and internationally. Pupils recognise the importance of attending school and show commitment to encouraging their peers. Attendance continues to improve with average attendance now reached by most year groups. Pupils have a good knowledge of different religions and show a social conscience towards others. They understand boundaries and consequences associated with what decisions they make. Cultural development is addressed through assemblies, projects and visitors to the school.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is good overall and leading to pupils making better progress than previously. Work to improve teaching and to motivate pupils is a focus of the school. Lessons are conducted at a good pace; teachers plan well and have positive relationships with pupils. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support, especially for those who find learning difficult. Where teaching is strong pupils are confident, listen well, work together and are able to describe their thinking. Where teaching is less effective, activities are not always matched appropriately to pupils' needs. Excellent assessment procedures have been devised and are generally used well. Teachers have a good understanding of what each child can do and what they need to learn based on accurate assessment and good use of tracking information. Work is marked on a regular basis and points for improvement reflected through a simple colour-coded system. However, pupils do not always correct their work and opportunities are missed to further engage pupils through self-assessment and questioning.

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Strong links have been developed between the Early Years Foundation Stage through to Key Stage 2 to ensure continuity and progression. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the whole school benefits from the emotional literacy programme which is embedded in all subjects. The curriculum is enriched through a raft of activities including sport, singing, art, drama and music. A year long project in Year 6 culminates in a drama performance at a local public theatre and

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pupils experience outdoor activities at Ghyll Head Pursuits Centre. These provide opportunities that the majority of pupils would not normally experience. The breakfast club is very popular with pupils, adding to their learning and enjoyment and improving attendance levels within school.

Care, guidance and support to pupils and parents are excellent. The school is a nurturing environment where pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. The school provides a welcoming environment for all pupils and staff form good relationships with them. Care is provided for all, but particular emphasis is on those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Support packages are built around the pupil and family and include external support. Interventions have been commissioned to include play therapy, a therapeutic horticulturalist and a school counsellor. Numerous case studies demonstrate that these and other interventions have led to improving pupils' life chances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, supported very effectively by the deputy headteacher has a good understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses. Together, with the support of staff and governors, they are moving the school forward and are fully committed to see the school further improve. Senior management provide clear direction and have successfully established a strong sense of good team work with leadership opportunities extended to a broader range of staff. As a result staff are motivated and say they 'feel valued'. The school is fully aware of the diverse needs of the pupils and has a strong commitment to equality. Discrimination is tackled and the school is effective in improving pupils' well-being.

The governing body is highly committed to pursuing the improvement of the school and there is an increasing rigour in monitoring and holding the school to account. All statutory responsibilities are met with a particular emphasis on safety for all. Governors have analysed where their own strengths and weaknesses lie and have taken steps to address these. This has resulted in a productive and professional partnership with the school and local authority.

Parents and carers value the work of the school, both in academic and pastoral terms. They appreciate the schools high aspirations for their children. Parents and carers say, 'Teachers are extremely approachable.' Improving the relationships between different communities is important to parents and carers and they welcome the good progress the school has made to develop these. The schools commitment to wider communication through using skilled staff for face-to-face support has been instrumental in engaging with

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parents and carers. A wide range of effective partnerships with other agencies are in place, ensuring specialist support for the most vulnerable pupils.

The school has an excellent knowledge of its context both culturally and economically. The impact of the schools efforts to create cohesion is striking, within the school community, and is appreciated by parents and carers. Opportunities to develop cohesion beyond the school locality are not as well developed.

The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures is outstanding. Excellent reporting protocols are in place and any concerns swiftly identified and followed through. All staff and volunteers receive extensive training focusing on issues that are relevant to the community. Safeguarding is built into the curriculum exceptionally well, given a high priority and underpins the school's work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises of a Nursery and three Reception classes. When they enter the Nursery children's skills are well below those typical for their age particularly in language development and social skills. This has become a focus of the provision. Due to strong leadership and good teaching rooted in tried and tested philosophies children make rapid progress. Frequent praise and encouragement from staff raises children's self-esteem and confidence. Teachers and teaching assistants work as one. They know the children well and make skilful observations to inform planning for individual children. The children's learning journeys show a detailed account of progression through the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Children enjoy their learning. They concentrate well on activities and show great skill when handling paintbrushes and demonstrate great pride when showing their creations. Children

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play well both independently and in small groups. They work as a team to see who can win the hula hoop game and help each other to complete tasks. Children accurately retell a storyboard in some detail and recognise the sequence of events. Children behave well and respond quickly to teacher instruction, tidying up quickly and efficiently when asked. A good partnership has been forged with parents and carers by involving them with their children's reading. Books are taken home on a regular basis and parents and carers have welcomed this. As a result progress in reading has improved.

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

Views of parents and carers

Fewer responses were received to the questionnaire compared with most schools. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who did respond or talked to the inspectors acknowledged that they are happy with their children's experience at school, with one parent saying, 'It is a caring school.' Parents and carers are also pleased that the school is now secure following concerns raised. Parents and carers value the school breakfast club and would appreciate a similar facility at the end of the school day.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorton Mount 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 509 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	65	24	32	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	70	21	28	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	51	69	23	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	59	28	38	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	74	18	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	68	21	28	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	66	24	32	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)	42	57	26	35	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	61	27	36	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	54	28	38	2	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	57	29	39	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	65	24	32	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	69	23	31	0	0	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 all 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



13 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorton Mount Primary School, Manchester, M18 7GR

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We particularly enjoyed meeting and talking to you during lessons. You were most helpful and polite at all times. I am writing to tell you what we found out.

You go to a good school that does some things exceptionally well, such as ensuring you are extremely well cared for within school. Your behaviour is good and you look after and help each other. We were pleased to hear how much you know about being healthy and enjoy the sports clubs. You recognise the importance of attending school everyday and we were delighted by how you encourage your classmates to do the same. The school is well led by your headteacher and she is given good support by teachers, teaching assistants and all the other adults that work at the school.

You are taught well and that is why you make good progress. You certainly made your feelings known in your letters to Mr Ismay in regard to the Titanic disaster. We also saw how you enjoyed planting your broad beans. We hope you enjoy watching them grow.

Your teachers work hard to make the school as good as it can be. To help them we have asked whether more of your lessons could be like the best ones we saw when you were involved in making decisions about how you learn and were able to investigate things for yourself. We have also asked the teachers to make sure the work you do is at the right level for all of you.

You can help with this by telling your teachers if the work is too hard or too easy and trying hard in lessons. Keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Gethin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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