

Audley Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119136
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	358498
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Philip Jarrett 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	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	297
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tasmin Raja
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Felton
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2007
School address	Queen's Park Road Blackburn Lancashire BB1 1SE
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed all classes twice. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of other evidence including lesson plans, school policies, assessment data and case study files. They also looked at all the questionnaires completed by staff and at the 62 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- Should the school be doing more to raise the attainment of key groups of pupils including boys, Pakistani pupils and more-able pupils?
- How effective is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage given especially low standards on entry, particularly in aspects of language and communication?
- Are the school's strategies to improve attendance and deal with persistent absence proving to be successful?
- Does the school work effectively with parents and carers in helping them understand how to support their children's learning?

Information about the school

Audley is larger-than-average for an infant school. It shares its site and some joint facilities with a junior school and a children's centre. Nearly all the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, mostly either of Indian or Pakistani heritage. Most pupils speak a first language that is not English. Around one third of pupils, a much higher than average proportion, have been identified by the school as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The school has received a number of awards including Healthy School Status, Artsmark, Activemark and Eco-Schools award. The current headteacher was appointed in 2008.

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

Audley Infant School is a good school because all staff work successfully together to provide a welcoming and supportive environment that helps pupils to learn well. The school is highly regarded by its parents and carers, and good leadership ensures that there is a continuous focus on improving outcomes for pupils. There is a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas of development, with clearly identified plans to raise standards and enhance the curriculum. There is a positive ethos in the school and staff work well to support common aims. Recent developments, including a rise in standards, indicate that there is a good capacity for further improvement.

Pupils' skills on entry to the school are well below national expectations. In addition, nearly all the pupils speak a first language other than English and this means that many struggle with aspects of communication in English when they first enter the school. However, progress is good across the school, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and most pupils reach broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 1. Below average numbers of pupils reach the higher standards and this has been identified by the school as a priority for improvement. In addition, in line with the national trend, boys attain less highly than girls and Indian heritage pupils do better than Pakistani heritage pupils. This has also been recognised by the school's leaders and recent changes led to slight improvements in the unvalidated 2010 results.

Behaviour in and around the school is excellent. Relationships are strong and pupils work well together. They say that they feel safe in the school and know who to turn to if problems arise. Pupils like school and try hard in lessons, although they are not always clear enough about how to improve their work. After a period in which attendance rose slightly, there was a substantial dip last year, especially in the number of pupils taking extended holidays abroad. Pupils are well cared for and particularly good support is provided for some of the more vulnerable pupils in school.

Recent improvements in standards and the curriculum are the result of good leadership. In particular, there has been careful consideration of the learning needs of pupils. Teaching is good overall and some especially well-planned and effective practice was observed during the inspection. However, there were times when the more-able pupils should have been challenged to achieve more. School development plans identify clearly some of the actions that are needed to bring about the necessary improvements in attainment for particular groups of pupils. They are less helpful in specifying what might be done to drive and secure further improvements in teaching and learning.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, especially for already identified groups of lower attaining pupils, by:
 - working closely with parents and carers to improve attendance
 - using existing good practice in teaching to ensure that all lessons consistently challenge the more-able pupils
 - extending pupils' understanding of how to improve their work
 - identifying more clearly in the school development plan, the strategies that will continue to enhance and develop the quality of teaching throughout the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Good progress by pupils enables most of them to achieve standards that are below, but close to, the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. Attainment has risen in recent years although few pupils yet reach the higher levels in either English or mathematics. Pupils are keen to learn and they listen carefully to their teacher and to each other. They enjoy lessons and work well in pairs and small groups. Although many pupils are confident and eager to share their opinions, some have difficulty expressing their ideas clearly, either orally or in writing. They respond well to practical tasks and show good concentration except where the pace of learning slows. In general, few of the pupils have yet developed the skills of independent learning and they tend to rely too much on teachers' guidance.

Pupils are polite, welcoming and keen to talk to visitors. Parents, carers and pupils report that bullying is not an issue in the school and that any minor examples of misbehaviour are soon dealt with. Pupils play and work together well. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and many pupils stay healthy because they take advantage of the good range of sporting activities provided. However, they are less clear about why exercise is so important. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community through the work of the school council, and by participating in some interesting environmental projects and regular charitable activity. Attendance remains a problem. After recent signs of improvement, absence levels increased substantially last year, as did the number of persistent absentees. This is despite energetic and well-planned work by the school to improve attendance. The school takes the issue very seriously and implements a range of thoughtful strategies, although at present with mixed success.

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

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	3
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	4
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?

Teaching observed varied in quality but was good overall. Relationships were consistently good and planning was thorough, including effective use of classroom and other assistants to support less-able pupils or bilingual learners. Learning objectives usually provided a clear focus to the lesson and classrooms were well managed to provide a stimulating environment for learning. The most effective teaching made especially good use of assessment in the lesson to identify where pupils were struggling or needed more help. Although teachers worked hard to match activities to pupils' prior attainment, there were occasions when more-able pupils might have achieved more.

The curriculum is well matched to the needs of pupils. There is an understandable emphasis on consolidating the skills of literacy and numeracy, and on using visual and other resources to engage learners. The school's use of cross-curricular topics enables pupils to apply skills across a range of contexts. The thorough and well-targeted intervention programme ensures that identified pupils receive extra help when needed. Pupils' experiences are enriched through a good choice of out-of-school activities. Senior leaders have identified a number of planned curriculum developments in areas including enterprise and community education, particularly to help develop pupils' independence and initiative.

Pupils are well cared for. Staff know them well and provide good support. Pupils settle quickly into the school and effective transition ensures that they move smoothly into new

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classes and, later, on to the junior school. Pupils' personal well-being is well promoted through the taught curriculum as well as other initiatives such as the Friendship Club. High quality support for vulnerable pupils and those facing challenging circumstances ensures that they are fully included in the life of the school. The school works well with pupils, parents and carers to help them overcome barriers to learning. Well-planned programmes are in place to help pupils catch up, including extra language help for bilingual learners and action to support pupils who take extended holidays abroad.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Effective leadership has brought about recent improvements in attainment, including for some targeted groups, and interesting curriculum developments. The headteacher and other senior leaders enjoy the confident support of staff, parents and carers. There is a clear vision for the future development of the school, based on a determined resolve to raise standards. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and this leads to a positive and supportive context in which all pupils can learn and develop. Thorough monitoring systems and effective tracking of pupils' progress ensure that the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well. Action plans are effective in identifying the key priorities for the school, such as the need for a clearer policy on teaching and learning. The governing body has a good understanding of issues and provides an appropriate balance of support and challenge. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding arrangements were good, and staff and governors had been well trained in child protection issues. The school has a clear understanding of the nature of its community and has identified appropriate actions to improve community cohesion, although some of this work is in its early stages and awaits detailed evaluation.

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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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Reception class with a range of skills and abilities that are well below those expected for children of this age, particularly in all areas of communication, language and literacy. Good links with local nurseries and the children's centre, supported by home visits, ensure that staff know the children well. Good relationships with parents and carers enable them to contribute fully to their children's learning and they are kept informed of the progress their children are making and what they need to do to support them. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well.

Strong emphasis is placed on ensuring that children are settled and confident within their surroundings and all staff understand clearly their roles and responsibilities. There is a wide range of continuous play and learning opportunities in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Good quality teaching and effective support by nursery nurses and teaching assistants, including good bilingual support, has a positive impact on children's learning and development. Children behave very well and they show positive attitudes to their work. Staff are effective in assessing how well children are achieving and they use this information to plan further changes. The recent emphasis has been on developing a curriculum that will motivate and improve engagement, particularly that of boys. Overall, children make good progress from very low starting points and an increasing number are getting close to the levels expected at the beginning of Year 1. All policies and procedures are currently in place to promote children's safety.

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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

As the table below shows, most parents and carers were extremely positive about the school. Overwhelmingly, they say that their children enjoy school and the school keeps them safe. They believe that the school keeps them well informed about their child's progress and they are also given opportunities to express their views and influence the direction of policy. In discussion with inspectors, they reported that they are made to feel welcome in the school. Few significant concerns were expressed by parents and carers. The inspection team endorses their comments and believes that the school communicates well with its parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Audley Infant 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 297 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	71	23	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	61	30	37	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	37	44	54	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	40	40	49	5	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	39	48	36	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	43	39	48	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	50	33	40	5	6	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)	34	41	36	44	2	2	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	40	37	45	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	36	44	35	43	0	0	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	30	38	46	4	5	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	42	51	33	40	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	54	36	44	1	1	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 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.



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Audley Infant School, Blackburn, BB1 1SE

It was good to meet you during the inspection. My colleagues and I enjoyed talking to you. We thought you were very polite and well behaved. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel safe. You said that behaviour was very good and that bullying was not a problem in the school. You also enjoy the wide variety of clubs and activities that the school provides outside lessons.

We think that yours is a good school. The headteacher and other staff look after you well. They know what needs to be done to make things even better. For example, although pupils make good progress and reach roughly average standards at the end of Year 2, the school wants more of you to achieve the higher grades. Teaching is good and we have suggested that teachers plan lessons so that more of you can reach those higher standards. We have also recommended that the school might want to talk about what makes effective teaching and how teachers can ensure that you all do as well as possible. It is also important that you all understand how to improve your own work and we think the school is right to discuss how teachers can do this even more effectively.

As you may know, the staff work very hard to try to make sure that you all attend school as much as possible. However, despite this, attendance was not very good last year and we have asked the school to work closely with parents and carers to try to reduce absence. We know that you like school and you can help by trying to make sure that you always attend whenever you can.

Thank you again for being so friendly and welcoming.

Yours sincerely

Philip Jarrett

Her Majesty's Inspector

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