

Lostock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105174
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	355719
Inspection dates	4–5 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Suzi Clipson-Boyles

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pat Cooper
Headteacher	Miss Gill Smith
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed nine lessons and eight teachers. They also made short visits to some classrooms to look at more focused aspects of learning. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and deputy headteacher, teachers, members of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at: policies; minutes from meetings; the school's data about pupil progress; reports from the local authority; details of staff training and development; records of incidents and complaints; and health and safety documentation. They also talked to parents and carers outside school, looked at English and mathematics books, and followed case studies of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The lead inspector read and analysed 104 questionnaires from pupils, 141 from parents and carers, and 21 from members of staff.

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

- How effectively mathematics is taught throughout the school.
- The consistency of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The extent to which the school has improved since its last inspection.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than others of the same type. The rate of new pupil arrivals and early departures between Year 1 and Year 6 is higher than average, due mainly to job mobility and the transfer of pupils into the private sector. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. There are seven classes, each of which is taught as a single year group. The school has a lower percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities than that nationally, including those with a statement of special educational needs. Since its last inspection, the school has achieved the Eco Award at bronze level and been re-awarded the Activemark. The school provides space for an independent registered after-school club, 'Kare4Kids'. This is registered and run by a private organisation and is subject to separate inspection by Ofsted.

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

This is a satisfactory school. Most pupils enjoy learning and say they feel happy and very safe. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes to lessons contribute well to their future economic well-being, as do their above average levels of attendance. The curriculum has undergone significant development and is effective in engaging pupils' interest and enjoyment. It makes meaningful links between subject areas. As a result pupils talk knowledgeably about healthy lifestyles and respond positively to the choices available. The curriculum helps them to develop a good understanding of safety issues. It also enables them to work cooperatively and to make good contributions to the school and wider community. The Early Years Foundation Stage is a particular strength of the school, providing stimulating learning opportunities that help children make good progress.

The quality of learning and progress across the rest of the school is variable, although it is satisfactory overall and improving rapidly. Attainment has generally been above average since the last inspection, but in 2009 there was a significant dip as a result of various staffing issues. The school recognised that pupils were not making enough progress given their starting points. The senior leadership team implemented a comprehensive plan of action and this year's results have improved considerably, returning to the previously above average attainment. Reading is particularly strong throughout the school. There is clear evidence that pupils are gaining ground because all teaching is now at least satisfactory and some is good.

Overall improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. With additional support from the local authority and other partners the school has reversed the decline in standards. Capacity to improve is satisfactory because systems are becoming well embedded and there are clear signs that weaknesses are being tackled more effectively. The work of all staff is closely monitored by senior and middle managers who have a good understanding of what is required and why. Challenging targets are being set and met. Pupil progress is reviewed regularly so that additional support can be provided swiftly when required. Self-evaluation is mainly accurate, although there is still a lack of sharp focus on overall school performance. Despite these improved systems and rapidly improving progress, too many parents and carers say they have lost confidence in the school. The school's engagement with parents and carers is inadequate because communication with a significant number is poor.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen learning and progress so that it is consistently good throughout the school by:

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- ensuring that all teachers adapt lessons more specifically for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- ensuring that the levels of challenge for pupils in the middle ability range are sufficiently high in all classes
- raising expectations in lessons for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1.
- Maintain a rigorous approach to school improvement in order to become a good school by:
 - considering all changes, projects and actions in relation to how they will improve outcomes for pupils
 - keeping a closer check on performance across all aspects of its work so that areas for development can be targeted more swiftly, accurately and systematically.
- Restore, as a matter of urgency, the confidence of all parents and carers in the effectiveness of the school by:
 - providing more regular and transparent information about school performance
 - developing clearer procedures on how staff, including senior leaders, are expected to respond to concerns
 - involving parents and carers more closely in decision-making and evaluations of the school's performance.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Inspectors observed many pupils enjoying their learning and participating well in lessons. Pupils listened carefully to their teachers and to each other during discussions and when sharing ideas. For example, Year 6 pupils were extremely mature in the way they adopted roles in a staged debate between councillors and graffiti artists. Pupils settled to tasks quickly and confidently when instructed to work independently in their books. They responded well to questioning and were confident to put forward their own ideas.

Although many pupils are achieving particularly well this is not consistent and so overall achievement is satisfactory. Attainment in mathematics is weaker throughout the school, but recent improvements to the teaching of mathematics are already having a positive impact and attainment is rising. All children starting in Reception have levels of skills and knowledge which are in line with national expectations for their age, and some are above. The progress they make during their first year leads to outcomes that are above national averages across all areas of learning. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, but some of the more able pupils are not making enough progress to reach the higher Level 3. Progress across Key Stage 2 gains speed and the current Years 5 and 6 pupils are making very good accelerated progress because of the high-quality teaching. Pupils falling into the middle ability range are not suitably challenged, however, in year groups other than Year 5 and 6. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is

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satisfactory and improving, but some teachers do not adapt their planning sufficiently to help these pupils meet more focused step-by-step targets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Incidents of bullying are rare and relate to one or two individuals. Pupils feel very confident that the school always deals with these incidents swiftly and effectively.

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	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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 satisfactory overall, and in some classes it is good. Teachers' plans meet the needs of most groups of learners, adapting activities according to ability. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do not always have additional resources or adapted targets, but they are supported well by other adults. Some teachers do not always make clear to the pupils the different focus for learning. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers and make a positive difference to the learning of groups. There is good use of discussion to develop ideas and many examples of practical approaches to learning were seen during the inspection. For example, Year 1 pupils were enjoying practising their measuring skills outside in the school grounds. The school has done considerable work this year on improving the use of assessment and this is making a difference to learning. Teachers are identifying different ability groups well and adapting the curriculum accordingly. Marking is used well to encourage and support learning, although pupils are not always given time to read and act upon teachers' feedback and

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guidance. The curriculum plays a significant part in improving outcomes for pupils. The skilled ways that teachers have facilitated the application of skills across the curriculum by making links between subjects has made a significant contribution to the much improved results in English and mathematics this year.

Learning is enriched through a variety of visitors to the school and trips to places of interest. These clearly have a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment and achievement.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school is a happy place and pupils feel that they have a voice to which the staff of the school listens. They feel well cared for and secure. The quality and range of information going home from school is good.

Information, workshops and pupil progress meetings provided by the school for parents and carers are extensive, including information by text and on the website. However, a significant number of parents and carers reported to inspectors that their communications to the school are not always dealt with sensitively or efficiently. There is inconsistency in the way teachers and senior leaders respond to queries and concerns. Other systems are also inconsistent, in particular the way that bullying is monitored by the senior leadership team.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Following a period of instability that affected pupil progress and attainment the staff at all levels, including governors, are now firmly committed to driving improvement. An ambition to become a good school by maximising the outcomes for all groups of pupils is firmly embedded. However, parents and carers do not feel they have a voice and their role is limited in evaluating the school's performance. The headteacher has been successful in her efforts to eliminate inadequate teaching, and teaching is rapidly improving. The deputy headteacher provides a strong lead alongside the headteacher. Together, they have worked in close partnership with the local authority to secure a comprehensive framework for school improvement. Middle managers are extremely efficient in applying their recently acquired skills of monitoring. Accountability is tight and pupil progress is top of everyone's agenda. The school works hard to tackle discrimination and racist incidents are rare. There has been an increased focus on different groups of learners to ensure equal opportunity. Some gaps in pupils' learning have been closed successfully during the last year, although there remain some inconsistencies. No groups make inadequate progress. The school promotes community cohesion to a satisfactory level, and the school community is extremely cohesive. Analyses have recognised the changing nature of the school's population and global links are developing. The school, including the governing

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body, ensures that pupils are safeguarded and all required policies and procedures are in place. The governing body provides sound management. It is developing well and has recently conducted its own self- evaluation as a means of identifying how it can become even more efficient.

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	4
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Reception are happy, keen to learn and making good progress in all areas of their learning. This is due to the skilled way in which the staff continuously assess their progress so that high quality learning opportunities can be provided. Stimulating environments are created indoors and outdoors so that children make good choices about their own learning. Different aspects of the curriculum are linked together to help make learning more interesting and meaningful. For example, during the inspection children were developing a wide range of skills and concepts through the theme of fireworks: inspectors observed children dancing, mixing colours with paint and on computers, counting and talking animatedly about their model creations. The staff take good care of the children and ensure that all the statutory welfare requirements are met. They guide and support them in their learning and help them to develop good behaviour and attitudes to learning. As a result children are able to work well independently and also cooperate maturely when working with one another. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Relationships with parents and carers are good. Systematic approaches to the analysis of data ensure that the provision is constantly being improved, although this is not always accompanied by sufficiently clear success criteria. By the end of their year in Reception, most children are above national average levels across the areas of learning, although fewer children reach the higher levels in mathematics and writing than in other subjects. Lesson planning is thorough, but staff do not always consider how children might require different levels of challenge in some areas of learning.

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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:	2
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

The views of most families were represented in the Ofsted questionnaire - an exceptionally high response. Over half the replies included additional written comments, most of which were negative. The main concerns related to: poor leadership and management; falling standards and the quality of education; poor communication between school and home; the way the school sets homework; and bullying behaviour. Inspectors checked the extent to which parents and carers have followed the school's complaints procedure by taking matters to the governing body in the event of the headteacher not resolving issues satisfactorily. There was insufficient evidence of formal written complaints to suggest that the leadership and management of the school is a concern to parents and carers. Inspectors agree with the view that attainment has fallen since the last inspection. However, there is good evidence that the school has made significant progress in improving teaching and learning. Systems in place are now robust enough to ensure continued improvement. Inspectors also agree with the view of some parents and carers that communication between home and school is weak. Responses by teachers to requests or concerns from parents and carers are inconsistent. There are clearly many differing views and preferences relating to homework and the school has already planned to hold a full review with parents and carers on this issue. Bullying was not found by inspectors to be a serious issue in school, although the behaviour of a very small number of pupils has, in the past, had an impact on one particular class. Inspectors found that incidents of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively, but the school's recording of incidents is not checked and followed up rigorously enough by senior managers.

Eleven positive comments related to children feeling happy and safe in school, and making good progress. Pupil questionnaires and discussions with different groups confirmed that most pupils enjoy coming to school and feel they are happy, safe and learning well.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lostock 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 141 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 194 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	55	52	37	5	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	58	52	37	2	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	28	83	59	15	11	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	36	26	70	50	18	13	6	4
The teaching is good at this school	40	28	78	55	11	8	4	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	33	70	50	14	10	3	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	32	72	51	14	10	2	1
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	30	75	53	8	6	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	30	70	50	13	9	3	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	25	67	48	19	13	7	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	23	64	45	29	21	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	27	19	68	48	21	15	11	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	34	71	50	14	10	5	4

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 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lostock Primary School, Bolton BL6 4PS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we carried out your school inspection recently. You were all very helpful and polite. Please thank your parents and carers for sending back their questionnaires and writing so many comments. These were very useful to us in finding out about the school, along with all the other things we looked at.

We have judged your school to be satisfactory. It is a safe and happy place where most of you enjoy learning. We were especially impressed with your behaviour. You work well in lessons and do lots of important jobs around school. You listen well to your teachers and work well with one another when discussing or planning things in lessons. You know a lot about healthy lifestyles and safety. In Reception, the children make particularly good progress. We looked carefully at how much progress you make in the rest of the school. In some classes you have to catch up because during the last two years some of the teaching has not enabled you to make as much progress as possible. The school has worked hard to improve this and we know that the teaching and your progress are much better now. In some classes you make good progress. Another inspector may make an extra visit to the school before your next inspection to see if it is improving. We have asked your teachers to work on three things in particular straight away. These are:

- to make sure that everyone is making equally good progress
- to check regularly that the school is continuing to improve
- to work more closely with your parents and carers so they feel more part of the school, especially when they are worried about you.

We know that you will want to help in every way you can by continuing to work hard and keeping up your good attendance. I wish you every success in your education.

Yours sincerely

Suzi Clipson-Boyles

Lead inspector

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