

Chowbent Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106443
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	355951
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sue Heady
Headteacher	Mr James Randle
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2008
School address	Laburnum Street Atherton, Manchester Lancashire M46 9FP
Telephone number	01942 883410
Fax number	01942 897773
Email address	enquiries@admin.chowbent.wigan.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2011
Inspection number	355951

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 13 lessons, taught by seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including samples of pupils' work, national assessment data and the school's assessments, safeguarding documentation, school policies and governing body minutes. Also taken into account were 64 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff members.

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

- Whether attainment is improving and more-able pupils, particularly, are sufficiently challenged.
- Pupils' personal development and how that affects achievement and their enjoyment of school.
- Whether new management structures are embedded sufficiently well to promote improvement.

Information about the school

Almost all pupils are White British in this smaller than average-sized primary school. An average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. A higher than average percentage has special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Before- and after-school care is offered on site. This is not managed by the governing body. Among the school's achievements are Healthy School status, Activemark and the Green Flag eco award.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher, with support from the governing body and committed school staff, has introduced effective measures to help move the school forward. In a relatively short time, they have brought about significant improvement in some areas of the school's work.

Improvements are underpinned by the good quality of care, guidance and support which the school provides. This has a positive impact on pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. As a result, performance in national tests in English has improved in the current year and attendance is above average. Attainment is also broadly average over time but insufficient challenge for more-able pupils means that too few reach the higher levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

Children's stages of learning and development are generally below expectations for their age when they enter Reception, especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Overall, they progress satisfactorily and continue to make satisfactory progress throughout the school. Teaching and the quality of the curriculum are both satisfactory. Leaders recognise that, despite improvements in teaching, the best practice is not yet shared widely across the school. Good partnerships, particularly with local schools, are beginning to enrich the curriculum for pupils and help teachers further develop their skills.

Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are polite and friendly, enjoy school and make a positive contribution to school life. They have good understanding of what it means to stay safe and healthy, and say that they always feel safe in school.

Leaders have carried out an accurate self-evaluation of the school's performance, identified priorities and set the school on a clear path to improvement. However, although the school has the confidence of most parents and carers, a small minority question the school's management of behaviour. Leaders agree that school strategies, especially those regarding behaviour management and its successes, are not always communicated to parents effectively. There are secure plans for future development. More robust systems for assessment, checks on pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching have been introduced. Expectations have risen and most pupils' achievement has improved. Leaders currently demonstrate satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

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.

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

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching by:
 - – improving the use of time and pace of lessons
 - – marking all work as rigorously as seen in literacy
 - – sharing the best practice effectively across the school.
- Raise attainment in English and mathematics at both Key Stages by making sure that more-able pupils are always sufficiently challenged.
- Strengthen the school's engagement with parents and carers by communicating strategies and successes more effectively, particularly those regarding behaviour management.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and achieve satisfactorily, overall, from a little below average starting points in Year 1. Attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 over the past three years but these standards are not higher because pupils' progress and achievement over time has been uneven. Too little challenge for more-able pupils has meant that too few reach the higher levels expected nationally. Nevertheless, there is a rising trend for attainment. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress but for some, progress is good. This is particularly the case where pupils benefit from attending the nurture group because of the good impact these sessions have on behaviour and attitudes to learning. Well-focused work in small groups also gives a good boost to pupils' language and number skills where it is most needed.

Most pupils say that they enjoy lessons. They work steadily, though a minority are sometimes slow to engage in written work. They work best when lessons are practical. Pupils in Year 3, for example, showed good levels of concentration when doing some detailed art work and Year 1 pupils got a good sense of achievement from completing their 'moving pictures' in a design and technology lesson. Pupils know their targets for literacy and numeracy and while most know the levels they have achieved, not all are certain about how to progress to the next one.

Pupils are keen to contribute to school life. Although activity in the wider community is limited, they carry out their various duties as council members, buddies, play leaders and eco-warriors' conscientiously. All pupils have opportunities to air their views via the school council and some good improvements to playground equipment have been negotiated. Pupils are fully aware of what constitutes a sensible diet and have extended their interest since beginning to cultivate vegetables in the school garden. They enjoy the range of physical activities provided during and after school.

Pupils say that behaviour in school has improved, that they feel safe in the playground and that there are no incidents of racist behaviour. Pupils conduct themselves sensibly around the school, are generally well-mannered and prepare themselves satisfactorily for future economic well-being.

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

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	3
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	3
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	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?

Teachers plan clearly and share learning objectives with pupils so they know what is expected of them. Tasks are set for different ability groups but these do not always challenge the more-able pupils by extending their thinking and independence sufficiently. In the best lessons, a good range of teaching methods and resources is used to motivate pupils and engage them in active learning. This adds pace to learning as well as enjoyment. Good questioning provides clear assessment of pupils' progress in the lesson and helps them to measure their own progress towards lesson objectives. Teachers' use of electronic whiteboards helps to bring lessons to life and pupils enjoy opportunities to use computers, for example to improve their mathematics. The best practices are inconsistent across the school, however. Some lessons lack pace and depend too much on teachers' explanations leaving too little time for practical learning. Improved systems for tracking progress and setting targets are a helpful contribution to rising standards. Plans are in place to introduce more refined assessment systems in the coming year. Teachers' marking in literacy books is generally good but the quality and helpfulness to pupils is not matched consistently to other subjects.

The curriculum provides satisfactorily for pupils' needs but is not sufficiently planned to meet the needs of more-able pupils. There is a strong focus on building up literacy and numeracy skills in order to raise attainment. Teachers are reviewing curriculum planning in order to provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their learning and skills more

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

purposefully through topics that link different subjects. There is a good range of sports activities after school to encourage healthy lifestyles, and pupils enjoy visits to art galleries and other places of interest in support of their learning in school.

A current strength of provision is care, guidance and support. This has been given high priority over the past year. A very large majority of parents and carers endorses pupils' views that they are well cared for in school. Those pupils whose circumstances may make them most vulnerable are exceptionally well provided for. Consequently, they are able to play a full part in school life. The school's clear and consistently-applied guidance for pupils has brought about significant improvement in their behaviour. The school works well with external agencies, also, to provide good support for pupils. Attendance shows rapid improvement because of the school's work with families, combined with rigorous and effective monitoring. There are helpful systems in place for pupils joining the school and good working arrangements with high schools to ensure pupils' smooth transfer to the next phase.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and governing body have brought settled leadership to the school following a difficult period since the previous inspection. New management responsibilities for staff and some new appointments have helped to set clear direction and accountability. Strategies introduced have improved the quality of provision, resulting in better outcomes for pupils. Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the school and committed fully to its continued improvement. Well-managed monitoring and support for teachers has begun to raise the overall quality though leaders recognise the need to continue that work. The governing body provides satisfactory challenge for the school. Members know the school well and are beginning to use the information they gain, from their monitoring and discussion, to hold the school to account more rigorously.

There are productive partnerships with other schools to help leaders improve their skills and compare standards. Most parents and carers engage well with the school but a small minority is not fully on board with all of school's plans and strategies for improvement.

Leaders strongly challenge all forms of discrimination. They are watchful to ensure pupils are given equality of opportunity and are aware of the need to monitor, particularly, the progress of more-able pupils. Safeguarding arrangements are good. Policies and practices are clearly shared with staff and regularly reviewed. There is some impressive practice in raising attendance. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school provides a culturally harmonious environment with good links shared with local groups. However,

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

pupils' opportunities to compare lifestyles and share experiences with groups beyond the locality are limited.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy their learning. Most settle into school routines well, become confident and establish good friendships although a very small number still needs help to manage their social and emotional skills. Learning in the classroom is planned well. It is purposeful and, at times, exciting for children. For example there was a 'buzz' of excitement at the prospect of attending Cinderella's ball which gave real meaning to dressing up, making necklaces and musical instruments and decorating crowns. Teachers use such opportunities well to encourage language and mathematical development.

The outdoor area provides very limited opportunities for exploration and play, which is why overall provision and progress are satisfactory. Nevertheless, it is used safely for some activities such as water play and building with large construction kits. Plans and preparations are in place for improvements in the near future. Provision for children's welfare is managed well. The suitably trained and qualified staff team give children's well-being high priority. Their progress is carefully observed and recorded and used effectively to plan next steps. Parents and carers appreciate the opportunities they have to contribute to their children's learning and development and good relationships with the school are maintained.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Around 33% of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of those, most are positive about the work of the school. A good number wrote supportive comments and letters while others came in person to talk to inspectors. Particular praise was given for the way the school supports pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, often changing patterns of behaviour.

A small minority of parents and carers, including some spoken to personally by inspectors, raised concerns about the school's management of behaviour and bullying. Inspectors followed up this issue by examining school policies, speaking to pupils and staff and observing pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school. They found that the policy was used consistently during the inspection and was effective in lessons because it is understood and considered by pupils to be fair. Those with particular difficulties are managed sensitively by staff. Pupils themselves say that bullying in school has been dealt with and that behaviour has improved. Inspectors saw satisfactory, and sometimes good, behaviour during the inspection. This issue, as well as the very few other issues raised, were discussed with school leaders while ensuring that parents' and carers' anonymity was protected.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Chowbent 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 64 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	38	59	17	27	6	9	3	5
The school keeps my child safe	36	56	21	33	7	11	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	47	24	38	10	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	48	24	38	6	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	26	41	29	45	5	8	2	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	42	28	44	8	13	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	47	28	44	4	6	1	2
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)	25	39	28	44	6	9	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	45	22	34	13	20	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	27	27	42	8	13	9	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	25	34	53	8	13	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	22	34	27	42	9	14	3	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	45	23	36	8	13	2	3

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.



7 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Chowbent Primary School, Manchester M46 9FP

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we came to inspect your school recently and for being so polite. It was a pleasure to meet you and talk about the things you enjoy at school. We learned a great deal. You said that you feel safe in school and we agree that the grown-ups in school take good care of you and that you are safeguarded well. You certainly know how to keep yourselves fit and healthy, and that is important. The biggest 'well done' goes to your attendance at school which is above average. That is very important, so do keep it up. You also told us that behaviour had improved and that bullying had stopped and we agree with you about that too.

Chowbent is a satisfactory school and you make satisfactory progress. The standards you reach in English and mathematics are average but they have improved and they could be higher. Your teachers work hard to make sure your lessons are enjoyable but some of you need to do harder work.

We know you are proud of your school and with your teachers, parents and carers and governing body want it to be better. Your headteacher has some good ideas to help that to happen and we have also asked for some things to be added to his list.

First, we have asked teachers to discuss with each other, regularly what works well in their lessons so that all of them are as good as the very best. Next, in order to help you reach higher standards in English and mathematics we have asked teachers to make sure that all of you, but especially those who are more-able, are always sufficiently challenged by your work. Finally, we have asked your school leaders to help parents and carers to understand better what they are trying to do, particularly with regard to improving your behaviour.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.