

# Delph Side Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119304
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379775
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Lynne Read

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	199
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Gwenda Brown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Janette Kewley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Eskdale Tanhouse Skelmersdale WN8 6ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 721881
<b>Fax number</b>	N/a
<b>Email address</b>	head@delphside.lancs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Lynne Read  
Stephen Docking

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a group of parents and carers and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence including the school's documents for self-evaluation and safeguarding. They also studied standards in reading, pupils' workbooks and the tracking system used to monitor pupils' progress. Inspectors considered the 55 questionnaires completed by parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller in size than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds; a small proportion have minority ethnic heritage and speak English as an additional language. A higher than average percentage of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. A higher than average proportion of pupils leaves or enters this school partway through a key stage. The school holds the Activemark, International School and Green ECO flag awards and has Healthy School status. The school meets the current floor standard which sets the minimum standards expected by the government for attainment and progress.

A breakfast club is provided on the premises. This aspect of care was inspected and is reported on within the text.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. A strong emphasis on promoting personal development results in outstanding behaviour and safety. The school is not yet outstanding because there are inconsistencies in provision and learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the quality of teaching.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress in many aspects of their learning, especially in personal development. In language and number work, progress is slower. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, achievement is good and attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Pupils’ skills in reading are a strength. Their writing skills are catching up quickly but some pupils have difficulty using key grammatical principles in their work. While the most able pupils work at higher levels, those at the top end of the average band do not consistently have the additional challenge they need in order stretch them.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of outstanding practice. Pupils have useful targets for improvement but in some classes, these are infrequently referred to in lessons. The quality of teachers’ marking is variable. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers assess work regularly but do not always use the information to set tasks at different levels. One outdoor learning area is very well developed; the other less so. Opportunities for pupils to apply their developing language and number skills are not always exploited to the full.
- Behaviour and safety and the promotion of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding features of this school. These factors make a significant contribution to the vibrant, productive atmosphere in school. Attendance is improving and is currently average.
- The headteacher and staff have high expectations and are ambitious for their pupils. Leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good although middle leaders do not monitor teaching rigorously enough to ensure consistency.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement further by:
  - developing pupils' understanding and use of written grammar
  - ensuring that pupils at the top of the average band are challenged consistently
  - ensuring that teachers refer to pupils' targets for improvement consistently in lessons so pupils know how to improve
  - ensuring that teachers' marking is of the best standard at all times and provides useful advice to help pupils improve their work
  - ensuring middle leaders have a more rigorous approach to the monitoring of teaching and learning in order to ensure consistency in teaching across classes and phases.
  
- Improve learning in language and number work in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring that assessments of children's progress are used consistently in planning work at different levels of difficulty
  - developing the outdoor areas so that they both cover all aspects of learning for this age group
  - providing more opportunities for children to practise their developing language and number skills during free choice sessions.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

All the parents and carers who returned the questionnaire agreed that their children are making good progress and that the school meets their children's needs well. Inspection findings support these views.

Children enter the Nursery class with skill levels that are below those expected for their age, especially in language and communication and personal development. The excellent behaviour management skills of the adults enable children to make rapid progress in personal skills and to develop a pleasure in, and a thirst for, learning. For instance, some children enjoyed mixing and exploring colour as they painted sea creatures while others tried out a range of 'tools' on their 'construction site'. Progress is good overall and by the time they enter Year 1, children are working much closer to the expected level in many areas of learning although early reading, writing and number work are still relatively weak.

Attainment is broadly average by Year 6 which reflects good progress from pupils' starting points. An increased emphasis on learning sounds and letters ensures that most pupils read confidently by the age of six and that attainment, in reading, is average. Skills are then extended further as pupils are encouraged to read from a wide range of quality books as they move through school. By Year 6, attainment in reading is above average for many pupils. The school identified a number of issues with writing and these have been addressed successfully and, as a result, many pupils are making accelerated progress as they catch up. However, a few still have difficulty in understanding and using grammar correctly. For

example, they may use the wrong tense or miss out key words. In lessons where pupils are encouraged to rehearse their writing out loud or constantly to self-evaluate their work, these mistakes are reduced. Mathematics lessons include frequent opportunities for problem solving and pupils say this subject is a great favourite. Teachers find novel ways to explain and illustrate concepts. For example, pupils completed some interesting, practical tasks in order to learn about fractions.

Pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and make the same progress as their classmates. New arrivals quickly integrate into the school community and often make rapid progress. The progress of boys and girls, and that of pupils with summer birthdays, is tracked very closely; intervention work successfully ensures that all groups make equal progress.

### **Quality of teaching**

Parents and carers overwhelmingly feel that their children are well taught. Pupils have similar views and say they know how well they are doing. They are highly motivated in their learning, describe lessons as 'fun' and say that teachers and other adults help them to do as well as they can. Inspection findings support this view.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching is good overall but there are inconsistencies in practice. Planning takes careful account of children's interests and tasks include interesting opportunities for children to choose activities, explore their world and develop independence. For example, children made collages of octopus and jellyfish, counting the number of legs and noting patterns. Others investigated packets, comparing weight, size and shape and trying to guess contents. In the main, prior assessment data are used effectively and teachers' planning focuses on different stages of development so that work builds accurately on children's prior learning. Occasionally however, planning is less effective, activities lack sufficient challenge and children's progress slows. The two classes are physically separate; one outdoor area is exciting with a wide range of well-planned activities, while the other is less well developed and does not allow for all aspects of learning to be covered in depth. In addition, opportunities for children to practise their language or number work varies from good to satisfactory across the two classes.

In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so pupils know exactly what is expected. Teaching assistants have good levels of expertise. They are effectively deployed to support groups and individuals to ensure that pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in lessons. The good curriculum ensures that lessons appeal to pupils' different dispositions. For example, in one lesson on symmetry, the visual stimulus provided by computers facilitated learning and generated interest. Planning caters well for the most able pupils. Those at the top end of the average group, however, do not always have the extra challenge needed to extend their thinking and abilities. Many improvements have been made to the quality of teaching but not all are embedded. Pupils have helpful long-term targets to guide their work. In many lessons, these are readily accessible and the teacher makes reference to them so that pupils have useful reminders to help them improve. However, this is not consistent practice. Marking often includes useful advice but it is sometimes less effective, especially in mathematics.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Parents and carers have exceptionally positive views about the standard of behaviour at the school and the very large majority agrees that bullying is dealt with effectively. Scrutiny of behavioural records and discussions with pupils show that pupils, including those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, are extremely well supported to cope with school life and that lessons are very rarely disrupted. Pupils live up to the high expectations that their teachers set and older ones display mature attitudes and self-discipline.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Through anti-bullying projects and lessons on personal development, they have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They are exceptionally well equipped to deal with risk and know what to do if they have a problem. The behaviour code is well known, respected and followed. Excellent opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, school councillors contribute much to the day-to-day running of school and to the process of decision making. Members of the ECO committee are responsible for promoting conservation and recycling while the peer mediators ensure happy playtimes.

The work of the learning mentor and attendance improvement worker has been instrumental in helping to improve attendance which is currently average. Pupils proudly display their rewards for good attendance and punctuality. Links with, and support for, families have helped to reduce the number of persistent absentees and holidays taken in term time. A current priority for the school entails working with a few families to improve attendance further.

## **Leadership and management**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is held in very high regard by parents and carers, staff and pupils. Well supported by the deputy headteacher, she provides strong leadership and direction for the school and works very effectively to provide the best for pupils. Staff morale is good and strong teamwork secures the school's highly supportive and caring ethos. These factors explain why 98% of parents and carers who returned questionnaires said they would recommend this school to another parent.

Comprehensive evaluation systems ensure that senior leaders have a clear overview of provision and performance. The information gathered is fed into school development planning; this is focused on the main priorities with clear actions and measurable targets. As a result, pupils' progress and attainment in writing has improved significantly this year because of improvements to teaching and resources and through well-planned professional development. The school has good capacity to improve further. Middle leaders monitor their subjects and areas but this process is not applied rigorously enough to ensure a consistency of approach across classes and phases.

The curriculum is good; it has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and ensures that individual needs are met. Creative and physical work is of a good standard and is well supported through visiting specialists. Pupils take good advantage of an interesting programme of extra-curricular clubs, residential visits and competitive sport. Staff and members of the governing body are focused on ensuring equality, making sure that opportunities are open to all, regardless of disability, special educational needs or financial circumstances. Thoughtful assemblies and links with a school abroad contribute much to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school does not

tolerate discrimination in any form and this contributes significantly to the harmonious community.

Strong partnerships bring many benefits. Extensive links with other schools and shared projects ensure continuity of learning for those pupils transferring to secondary school. They also provide additional experiences such as Spanish lessons and textile work. Safeguarding arrangements meet all requirements; the site is secure and staff training is up to date. The governing body provides good support for management. A well-informed curriculum committee keeps a close eye on achievement and parent governors play an active role in maintaining the good partnership between school and home. The breakfast club provides a good start to the day, offering healthy food, fun exercise routines and interesting activities.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Delph Side Community Primary School, Skelmersdale, WN8 6ED**

Thank you for the very warm welcome and smiles you gave us when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. Delph Side Community Primary provides you with a good standard of education. Good teaching enables you to achieve well and the school helps you to develop into well-mannered and caring people. You get on well together and take good care of each other. Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Well done! Thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who talked with us. It is good to know that you like your teachers, learn a lot, feel safe and are happy in school.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Your writing has improved really well recently. However, we think learning could be improved further so we have asked the adults in your school to:

- provide more help with grammar when you are writing and make sure that those of you who learn quickly are always challenged
- make sure that you are reminded about your targets in lessons and that marking provides you with a good amount of help and advice, especially in mathematics
- improve progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, in early reading, writing and number skills.

In addition, we have asked your teachers to check lessons to make sure that all these improvements are working.

You can help by continuing to work hard, being keen to learn and keeping up the improved attendance. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had. Please accept our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read  
Lead Inspector

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