



The Valley Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 133980
LEA Bolton

Inspection number 274865
Inspection dates 8 – 9 June 2005
Reporting inspector Anna Dawson

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Hibbert Street
School category	Community		Off Blackburn Road
Age range of pupils	3 – 11		Bolton
			BL1 8JG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 332684
Number on roll	542	Fax number	01204 332685
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Jim Sherrington
Date of previous inspection	n/a	Headteacher	Mrs Gwen Acton OBE

Age group	Published	Reference no.
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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of The Valley Community Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large local education authority partnership school, opened in September 2003. It is in a socially and economically deprived area. Free school meals are above average, with more pupils entitled to them who go home for lunch. Ninety six per cent of pupils learn English as an additional language, which is very high. Other pupils are of white, British origin. Most pupils come from Indian families and speak Gujarati as their home language; a smaller minority come from Pakistani families and speak Urdu. They enter the nursery with little or no English. There are 10.3 per cent of pupils with special educational needs, which are mostly learning difficulties. This is below average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

This is a good school with some outstanding features. Overall, inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation of its performance. Inspirational leadership by the headteacher, which is recognised nationally, has created, in a very short time, a vibrant learning environment that is at the heart of its community. There is good provision in the Foundation Stage. Pupils are taught effectively and achieve well throughout school. The pupils enjoy learning because the school takes great care to include them in all aspects of school life. The cultural heritages of all pupils are celebrated. Great care has been taken to use striking displays and decorations to foster a colourful and unique learning environment. Consequently, parents and pupils are highly satisfied with the school.

The school has recognised that more resources are needed in information and communication technology (ICT) to raise standards further. The school priorities include raising standards in writing in Years 1 and 2. Teachers work well together for improvement, but do not always share their expertise or best practice sufficiently. Similarly, subject leaders are not consistently rigorous in their monitoring of teaching and in using their evaluations to improve further the already good practice. The school provides good value for money and has very good capacity to improve.

Grade: 2

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the provision in ICT in order to raise standards further.
- Share best practice in teaching more widely and improve the quality and usefulness of monitoring.

Achievement and standards

The pupils achieve well and meet the challenging targets set for them. Most children enter the nursery speaking very little or no English. However, they soon learn the language. By the time they start in Year 1, most make good progress towards achieving the national targets set for them. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing their basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics well. Here, standards are close to national expectations. They do better in reading than writing although standards in writing are improving. This is a better picture than 2004. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 3 to 6, because they are taught well. Pupils attain broadly average standards in English,

mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Whilst standards in ICT are average, insufficient resources restrict pupils from progressing further. In 2004, the Year 6 test results were outstanding. This year standards are lower and reflect variation in the ability of different year groups. There are no significant differences in achievement between boys and girls. Whilst pupils from minority ethnic groups make good progress, pupils from Indian families do particularly well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets.

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being

The pupils enjoy school greatly. They love their beautiful new building and feel that learning is fun. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance levels. Behaviour throughout the school is exemplary. Pupils are extremely polite and well mannered. They work and play together harmoniously. Pupils take great care that everyone feels included in activities and support each other well if problems arise. They are very keen to carry out helpful tasks, like answering the telephone in the school office and showing visitors around the school. The school council provides pupils with a positive experience of working together for the good of the community.

The inspectors feel that pupils' attitudes and behaviour and personal development are better than the school self evaluation suggests. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well. They develop high levels of self-esteem and confidence, because their achievements are highly valued and rewarded. In turn, they value others and respect their opinions and beliefs. They show care and concern for others, for instance through raising money for charities. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They have a good awareness of the benefits of having a healthy diet and exercising regularly.

Grade: 1

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned, stimulate pupils well and celebrate their cultural backgrounds. Teachers give clear explanations and use questions effectively to draw out what pupils know and to challenge them further. In the best lessons, the teachers' grasp of the subject is strong and they are very enthusiastic. Consequently, the pupils learn rapidly. Teachers have a good understanding of what pupils need to learn next because they regularly assess their progress. Tasks are set at the right level for

pupils of different abilities. Teachers talk to the pupils about what they expect from them and they know what to do to improve their work.

Pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language develop their spoken English very quickly, because this aspect is very effectively taught by teachers and knowledgeable bilingual assistants. They are given good opportunities to share their ideas and their responses are highly valued. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported, to enable them to meet their individual targets. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and behave well. Consequently, pupils try their best. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to ensure that pupils develop confidence and succeed in learning.

Grade: 2

Curriculum and other activities

The school's rich curriculum provides many interesting things for pupils to do. Work for the youngest children is well planned and they make outstanding progress when learning English. Throughout the school, basic skills in English and mathematics are developed well, but pupils need more practice in writing in all subjects, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Pupils could achieve more in ICT, but there are insufficient resources for them to make more than satisfactory progress. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned and, as a result, they learn effectively. Good provision is made for the most able and those with particular gifts or talents. There are many activities outside lessons that pupils enjoy very much, including sporting events. Provision for personal development is exceptional and pupils relish opportunities to value and help others. They learn to lead healthy, safe lives and to work together, but their knowledge of the world of work is not as well developed.

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. The quality of care for their health, safety, protection and progress is outstanding. Staff know the pupils very well and provide a very useful programme for personal development. The advice given to pupils about what they need to do to improve is clear and encourages pupils to aim high. Pupils speak openly of the trust they place in adults around the school. They value the work of the older pupils who act as mediators in difficult situations. Relationships are very positive, which helps pupils to make good progress. A special feature of the school is the beneficial work done with parents to ensure they have every chance to play their part in pupils' learning. Parents are welcome and frequent visitors to the school. The care given to pupils and their parents is higher than is recognised in the school self-evaluation.

Grade: 1**Leadership and management**

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. The drawing together of the parents, staff and pupils from the two amalgamated schools has been successfully and quickly achieved, with perseverance and clear vision. The work of the headteacher is recognised in the award of the OBE. The school's aims are very well shared, understood and agreed by all the school community. The staff work enthusiastically as a team to promote equal opportunities and to improve the pupils' performance. Good quality training and positive attitudes mean that the staff respond to new initiatives quickly and positively. Consequently, staff morale is very high.

There are many more strengths than weaknesses in the way in which the school checks on its own performance. Self-evaluation is strong. Parents, pupils, teachers and all other staff are routinely and systematically consulted when planning improvements. However, the very best practice that exists in the school is not always shared systematically enough to ensure that all teaching is consistently good or outstanding. Not all subject leaders monitor the quality of teaching or the pupils' test results rigorously enough.

The governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They discharge their responsibilities very well and statutory requirements are met. They worked particularly hard to bring two communities together to create this new school. They use the available resources from the budgets of the two amalgamated schools thoughtfully and prudently. They have prioritised substantial funds to reorganise staffing and to enhance the accommodation. Overall, leadership and management in the school are good.

Grade: 2

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	2
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	3
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Delete as appropriate
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily.	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise.	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse.	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health.	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Delete as appropriate
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place.	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism.	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them.	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Delete as appropriate
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships.	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them.	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Delete as appropriate
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills.	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams.	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in Key Stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form.	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14-19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy.	NA

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The Valley Community Primary School
Hibbert Street
Off Blackburn Road
Bolton
BL1 8JG

10 June 2005

Dear Pupils,

As you know, a team of inspectors visited your school recently to find out if the school is giving you the sort of education you should receive.

First of all, thank you very much for welcoming us to your school so well. We enjoyed talking to you about your work and finding out about the things you like doing.

I am pleased to say that the school has many strengths and some outstanding features, as well as some things for improvement. The things that we particularly feel are good are:

- Your headteacher is outstanding and works very well with you, the staff, your parents and governors for the good of the school.
- You appreciate your new community school and find it a happy and exciting place, where you enjoy learning.
- Your behaviour is exemplary and you help and care for one another very well.
- Your school makes sure that it cares for you all equally well.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make your school even better. These things are:

- We would like the children in Years 1 and 2 to continue to improve their skills in writing.
- We would like you to have more resources for information and communication technology (ICT) so you can practice and develop your skills further in lessons.
- We would like the teachers to improve their already good teaching by sharing together more often and more widely the things they do well.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of the school. We hope that you will carry on enjoying lessons and continue to help your teachers to make The Valley Community Primary School an exciting and happy place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Anna Dawson
Lead inspector