



# Gaskell Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105155  
**LEA** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 277305  
**Inspection dates** 19 October 2005 to 20 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Frank Carruthers CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Thomas Holden Street
<b>School category</b>	Community		Bolton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Lancashire BL1 2QG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333666
<b>Number on roll</b>	308	<b>Fax number</b>	01204 333667
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr C Morris
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Alison Nightingale

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized primary school is close to the centre of Bolton and there is a significant amount of social and economic disadvantage in the locality. About two thirds of the children are from minority ethnic heritage and most start at the school with little English. This proportion is much higher than in most primary schools. The families of some children are asylum seekers, refugees and travellers and a small number of children are in public care. An above average number of children start or leave the school at times other than at the start of the Reception Year or the end of Year 6. About 17 per cent of children have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, this is about average for primary schools, and nine children have a statement of special educational need. The attainment of the children on entry to the Nursery is well below average and in communication, language and literacy it is very low. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities initiative and has several constructive partnerships with local schools.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school and this judgement reflects closely the school's evaluation of its own performance. The children achieve well and the many who learn English as an additional language make very good gains in acquiring the language. Standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly average by Year 6, though standards in writing are below average. Strengths of the school are the very high levels of care, support and guidance that children receive from staff. These are very important features in a school with a high proportion of children from different ethnic backgrounds, some of whom are newly arrived in this country. Leadership and management of the school are good. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good. The children's behaviour is excellent and their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Links with outside agencies and other schools are highly effective. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are high quality. The school has made good improvement since the last inspection and has good capacity to improve the shortcomings identified in this report. The cost of educating a child at the school is about the average of primary schools nationally and, given the good provision and outcomes, the school gives good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the standard of children's writing by offering more exciting opportunities that stimulate children to write and by helping them to be more aware of targets to improve their work.
- Develop the role of governors so that they forge stronger links with the school and have a better awareness of how the school is performing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well and those who are learning English as an additional language make very good progress. Thanks to the very good support these children receive in the Nursery and Reception classes, for instance by the bi-lingual staff, they do as well as the white British children in the classes and become confident learners. By the end of the Reception Year, most children have reached the early learning goals in some but not all aspects of learning. Most are still working towards the goals in communication, language and literacy, for example. All children make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics throughout Years 1 to 6. This is the result of good teaching and assessment procedures. In writing, children's progress is satisfactory. This is the last element of language that children tend to acquire, especially boys and those learning English as an additional language. The school must concentrate more on developing writing, for example, by making writing tasks more stimulating and interesting, especially for boys.

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 have shown an improvement each year from 2000 to 2005. This is due to effective teaching and support, particularly

for those children learning English as an additional language. Current standards are just below average overall. Standards in Year 6 in reading, mathematics and science are broadly average and this indicates good achievement. Standards in writing are below average. These findings are reflected in the latest unvalidated test results in 2005. The school's targets for children are not always met and are adversely affected by the above average number of children who start or leave the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year or the end of Year 6. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Children who are in public care and those who join school later, such as asylum seekers, settle in and make good progress thanks to the exceptional levels of care and support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children have positive attitudes towards school and enjoy talking about the things they do. They work hard in lessons and share and cooperate with each other very well. The children's personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Children understand right from wrong and behave very well in lessons, in the playground and around the school. They are polite and courteous to each other and to visitors. They respect and understand the feelings, beliefs and values of the different culture groups within the school. They understand the importance of healthy eating and the benefits of regular exercise. They learn how to work together and have recently raised several hundred pounds towards the earthquake disaster in Kashmir. Children are proud to be members of the school council. They understand that they have been elected to help other children and suggest improvements to the school's provision. They were heard to say, 'It's because of us that we are more healthy because we eat fruit at break instead of crisps!'. Although attendance is still below average it has improved consistently over the last three years. In the latest reporting year, 2004-2005, attendance was just one percentage point below the national average. The school is working very hard to improve attendance by implementing new initiatives, but families taking children on extended holidays during school time are still a cause for concern.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that teaching is good. Those children who have English as an additional language achieve very well because of the high quality, targeted support that they receive. Lessons are well planned and meet the full range of children's needs. Teachers manage the children well and the excellent behaviour and relationships evident in classrooms ensure that children concentrate well. Many opportunities are provided for children to discuss ideas with partners and these help their speaking, listening and work skills. Interactive whiteboards have had

a positive impact on teaching and help to bring learning to life for the children, especially to motivate boys. Effective teaching assistants provide good support for individuals and small groups of children. A key strength of the teaching in the Foundation Stage is teamwork, whereby the children receive very good help from adults who constantly engage them in conversation to promote their skills of communication and to challenge their thinking. Good systems are in place to assess and track children's progress throughout the school. However, children could benefit from being more familiar with their individual targets in writing than they are currently.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum meets requirements and is effectively planned and organised to meet the needs of all the children in the school. It very successfully meets the needs of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have English as an additional language. High quality plans for these children are linked closely to work covered in lessons and so all children are fully included in all the activities. The tasks set for children build on what they have already achieved and promote basic learning skills as well as providing factual knowledge. The school promotes well the children's awareness of safety issues and a healthy lifestyle and is working towards the Healthy Schools award. It has been working to link subjects of the curriculum in a creative manner. Themed weeks, such as the Book Week and the very successful Beaming Project, fire the children's imagination, particularly boys. More opportunities such as these are needed to stimulate children to write. Work in the classroom is complemented by the very wide range of other activities that enrich the curriculum well.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's care for its children is outstanding. Detailed formal records enable teaching staff to track and report on children's personal and social development and show how they can support them further. Parents and their children gain much from teachers' helpful advice on the next steps in learning, though the children are not sufficiently aware of their targets in writing. Teachers thoroughly understand whole school and individual needs, especially those of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are beginning to learn English. Vigorous child protection procedures ensure the children's welfare and safety. All staff are sensitive to children's feelings and anxieties, particularly those of the most vulnerable. They take particular care to include all children in every aspect of school life. Teachers strongly promote learning in groups and pairs so that children take and demonstrate joint responsibility for what they do. Children are supervised well both in and out of school, with detailed risk assessments available where needed. The school provides a secure, healthy working environment, ensuring that external agencies are promptly referred to as and when required.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management of the school are good and governance is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, who have joined the school since the time of the last inspection, have created a strong senior management team with representation from team leaders across the age groups and from a very effective school business manager. The team sets the tone for the school and provides excellent care, support and guidance for the children. The school's procedures to monitor how well it is doing are good and its evaluation of its performance closely mirrors the findings of inspectors. School improvement has been good since the last inspection, with developments in areas such as reading resources and information and communication technology, rising standards among the younger age groups especially and better attendance levels. Parents have very positive views about the school, which has begun to canvass their opinions and act on them. The governing body has gone through a period of considerable change. There is a new chair of governors and several vacancies have recently been filled. Governors have training needs, particularly in relation to analysing data about the school. They have a good range of expertise and a diversity of ethnicity that promises well for the effectiveness of their role. They meet their responsibilities satisfactorily, but need to develop more links with the school. The school has good capacity to improve.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school and please pass on our thanks to all the other children we met and spoke to while we were at school. We enjoyed our visit very much. Now we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

There are very many things that are good. For instance:

- the staff in your school are doing an excellent job taking care of you all
- you work hard and we were very impressed with how well many of you are learning two languages, English and your own family's language
- your behaviour is excellent and you are all growing into sensible students who want to learn and find out
- the staff provide you with good opportunities to learn about living in a healthy, safe way as well as the chance to enjoy activities and clubs after school.

We are suggesting a few things for your staff and the school's governors to do:

- we want the staff to help you to write stories, poems and reports better through more exciting opportunities like the one recently during Book Week, when the author visited your school
- we hope your school's governors will be able to get more involved in seeing how the school works and what lessons are like.