



Pikes Lane Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105161
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 277306
Inspection dates 30 January 2006 to 31 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Terry McDermott CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gibraltar Street
School category	Community		Bolton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire BL3 5HU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 333633
Number on roll	363	Fax number	01204 333634
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr R Speak
Date of previous inspection	13 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr K Ellis

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average size school serves an area of social deprivation near the town centre of Bolton. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Pupils' attainment on entering school is well below average and a very high percentage does not have English as their first language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Attendance is below average and very few pupils transfer in and out of the school during the year.

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 and improving school. It gives good value for money.

Attainment on entry is well below average and many pupils start school with very limited skills in English. They do well in the Foundation Stage because provision is good. By the time they leave the school, they reach standards that are broadly average. Pupils make good progress because consistently good quality of teaching ensures that they learn well.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is a good role model. Procedures for assessing the progress pupils make, and for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are in place. Parents are happy with the school. Their views are taken into account, and they are kept informed of developments. However too many parents take their children abroad during school time, and this has an undoubted effect on their progress over time. Governance is satisfactory.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers plan interesting lessons which sustain the concentration of pupils. This ensures that pupils learn well.

Pupils' personal development is good. This is as a result of the school's caring approach. All pupils are included and there is rich harmony and celebration of different cultures. Every child is treated as an important individual. Pupils behave well and are very positive learners. Since the last inspection, standards have clearly risen, all the key issues have been dealt with, and improvement has been good.

The school knows its strengths and is maintaining them. It knows the areas it needs to develop and is working steadily to address them. It is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

Raise achievement for all children by:

- continuing the current focus on improving pupils language skills so that they are able to access all subjects more easily.
- seeking ways to improve the retention of Governors, so that they can more effectively help the school to improve its standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Foundation stage of education with attainment well below average. Many cannot communicate in English. From this time on, pupils make consistently good progress in all years and leave with average standards by the end of Year 6.

In the Reception classes, pupils make good progress in their personal skills, such as learning how to work and play with other children. Their communication skills are improving, but still remain below average for their age when they join Year 1.

Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing,

as well as information and communication technology (ICT), which was not good enough at the time of the previous inspection. All pupils make the same good progress as others, because the school goes to great lengths to provide lots of different types of support. In particular, the pupils whose first language is not English are helped to improve their spoken English quickly so they can play a full part in lessons.

The school's managers set challenging targets for test results and usually these are met or exceeded. In 2005, unvalidated results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 fell significantly in English and science, bringing the school's overall performance down to below average. The school is challenging the validity of these results. There is reliable and strong solid evidence gathered from relentless tracking of pupils' progress to suggest that results in 2006 will show the same good level of achievement as in previous years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges personal development and well-being as good. Pupils indicate they feel safe and secure and enjoy school. When asked directly if this was the case, one inspector received an incredulous 'Of course?' in response. Relationships with staff are good and pupils behave well. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously. For example older children acting as 'peer mediators' and 'playground pals' are positive role models for younger ones, encouraging them to be confident and happy at school. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and engage quickly and enthusiastically in lessons. Many benefit from the extensive range of extra-curricular activities that are provided for them. Although attendance is improving it is still below average mainly due to leave of absence taken by many pupils on extended family trips abroad. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Cultural development is a strength of the school as a result of its celebration of the diversity of pupils' backgrounds and faiths. Community links are strong. Pupils show their awareness of the needs of others by holding fund raising events throughout the year. The school works closely with parents, keeping them well informed about their children's progress. The school council is effective in enabling pupils to contribute to decision making. For example, they have been instrumental in designing, planning and implementing improved playground facilities. The school promotes healthy life styles well.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school accurately judges the quality of teaching and learning to be good. As a result, pupils achieve well. Expectations are clear, routines are well established and relationships are good. Consequently, pupils work hard, do their best to please their teachers and behave well. Teachers provide interesting things for pupils to do as seen in a food technology lesson for pupils in Year 5. They worked very well in the 'Biscuit

Factory', learning to work in teams and made delicious biscuits in a 'fun' learning environment. Teachers' very effective use of interactive whiteboards in many lessons supports the clear explanations given.

Teachers are beginning to make good links between the different subjects and this is making learning more meaningful for pupils. They are encouraged to give their opinions and ideas in lessons, and they are given the space to formulate their thoughts. Most are happy to contribute to the discussion even when they are unsure of the answer because they know that teachers value their ideas. Pupils who struggle with their work get very effective help from support staff. Teachers are currently concentrating on speaking and listening skills to improve progress in all subjects. The school now has good assessment procedures in place to monitor progress but these have not yet had time to impact fully on the standards that pupils achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation of its curriculum as good. All the statutory requirements are met. The whole curriculum gives children many exciting things to do. Work in the classroom is complemented by opportunities for pupils to take part in other 'hands on' activities. The school is now placing more emphasis on subjects in addition to English, maths and science, seeking to help pupils make sense of what they are learning by improving links between subjects. The appointment of specialist teachers in subjects such as music and physical education has been of particular benefit to this initiative.

The school is working hard to extend the provision of extra-curricular activities especially for girls. For example, a computer class for girls only and self-defence classes for mothers and daughters have recently been set up. In addition, the school is providing a growing number of opportunities for sporting activities, music and the arts. As well as adding to pupils' enjoyment of learning, these enrichment activities encourage healthy lifestyles.

The school is aware that many pupils need help with language skills in order to achieve success in their learning and in tests. This is now a feature of teachers' planning, and is integrated with the use of information and communication technology to improve learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school cautiously evaluates care, guidance and support as good. Inspection shows it to be outstanding. Arrangements for child protection are robust and both parents and children express high levels of trust in staff. Health and safety procedures are very effective in ensuring that pupils are safe at all times. Risk assessment procedures are in place. There are many opportunities for children to succeed and have their achievements recognised, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. Behaviour is consistently good and relationships between the different ethnic groups are very

positive. Sensitive support is provided across the school for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school is very responsive to the needs of its most vulnerable children.

External agencies are used very effectively. The school has well developed links with the local high schools. The school actively promotes the children's health by providing good opportunities for physical exercise. Through very effective tracking and marking systems pupils have a good understanding of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is successful because the headteacher, through his good leadership, makes sure that everyone is involved in making the school a better place. The level of cooperation between staff, parents and established governors is good, so that all are pulling in the same direction and working hard for the sake of the children. The school gets a good idea of its strengths and weaknesses as a result of the high level of consultation. All those involved, from children in nursery to parents, are asked their views, which are taken seriously and acted upon. Quite rightly, the school is very keen for parents to understand that taking their children out of school for extended trips abroad has an adverse effect on their progress.

When weaknesses are identified, the school takes effective action. Writing, for example, had been seen as a weakness in the past so the school drew up a plan to improve it and standards in writing have improved. The main weaknesses identified in the previous report have been tackled very well and are no longer issues for the school. Such improvements are the result of the strong focus placed on moving the school forward by the school's managers.

One excellent feature of the school is the way that staff are deployed to the maximum benefit. The school has used recent changes in teachers' conditions of service to provide staff with planning time in pairs, while their classes are being taught by specialists in other subjects such as art and design. This is improving the quality of planning across the classes while, at the same time, improving standards in the teaching of subjects. Staff are also given considerable levels of responsibility, to which they respond enthusiastically, leading to good levels of leadership in many areas of the school's work.

Governance is only satisfactory because of the rapid turnover of many parent governors. This puts an increasing burden on the longer established members of the governing body, who do not then have the capacity to help the school move forward.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	1	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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	
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	
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	
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 very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We liked listening to you tell us about your school. We especially liked having our dinners with you, when you were so polite, friendly and helpful to us.

We think that Pikes Lane is a good school. We were really impressed with the way that Mr Ellis and all the other adults care for you and look after you. We were also impressed with the way that the teachers keep your lessons busy and happy, and with the enthusiastic way you join in and go about learning.

However, we also think that a lot of children take too much time off school. If you really want to learn well, you must attend school as much as you possibly can. This will help you a great deal as you get older, and will make the school an even better place to be than it is now. Please think about this very carefully.

Listen to what the grown ups in school have to say, keep working hard, and you will do well.

I would like to wish you all good luck and every success in the future.