



Northern Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119190
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280485
Inspection dates 8 December 2005 to 9 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Lynne Read

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Burnley Road
School category	Community		Bacup
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, OL13 8PY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01706 874154
Number on roll	174	Fax number	01706 879648
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Deborah Scott
Date of previous inspection	1 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Felicity Jane Simpson

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 December 2005 - 9 December 2005	Inspection number 280485
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in the village of Weir, close to Bacup in Lancashire. The pupils come from a diverse area including the town, villages and farms. Most are white British with a small proportion having Asian or European heritage. Around two per cent of pupils are bilingual and none are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. When they enter the reception class, pupils' attainment is broadly average. The percentage of pupils who claim free school meals is lower than most primary schools. A lower than average number of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities but an above-average number have statements of special educational need. The school has been through a period of staffing instability that has affected the continuity of provision and management.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself as effective and improving and inspectors agree. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She is the driving force for moving the school forward. Other leaders, including the governors, form a strong supporting team. Senior and middle managers are discharging their new roles diligently and have come a long way in a short time. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Standards for pupils entering the school and when they leave are average. Progress is satisfactory overall and good for those with learning difficulties. There is scope to improve progress and this is recognised by the school. Improvements since the last inspection are good and the recent improvements in progress and rising standards, together with the schools accurate self-evaluation show good capacity to improve further.

Pupils' personal development, the quality of the curriculum and care and support for the children are all good. Teaching is satisfactory overall, much is good, but some lessons do not challenge all of the pupils fully. In the reception class, provision is satisfactory and there have been good improvements to planning and teaching. However, the resources and classroom layout do not allow enough opportunities for the children to consolidate their skills.

The school makes good use of outside agencies to enrich the curriculum. Leaders take account of pupils' and parents' views when planning improvements. The parents' association provides valued support for enrichment activities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the findings of classroom monitoring to ensure consistently high expectations of learning in all lessons.
- Improve classroom and outdoor resources for the reception class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. When children enter the reception class they have a range of skills and knowledge that is broadly average for their age. Learning in the teacher-directed sessions is good, especially in the early stages of reading and writing and mathematical understanding but lack of resources limit the teacher's planning for independent activities. Progress is satisfactory, therefore, and attainment is average overall when pupils enter year 1.

In years 1 and 2 progress is satisfactory and is improving for the older pupils, especially those capable of higher attainment. Standards in reading are good. The 2005 results for Year 6 showed a good improvement in progress and this is sustained for the current year group. The school predicts that an improved percentage are on target to achieve the higher level in English and mathematics; the inspection team confirms this. The

improvements are due to better assessment of progress and more challenging targets for learning. Pupils from minority ethnic groups do as well as the majority and there are no major differences between the progress of boys and girls. Those who have learning, medical or behavioural difficulties make good progress because staff make good use of specialist help to meet their needs fully.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that personal development and well being are good. Pupils enjoy school and are polite and courteous. In discussions, children say they feel safe and their views are respected. Attendance is around average with very little unauthorised absence.

Overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are promoted well, although the school is aware of the need to further develop an understanding of the multicultural nature of society. Children have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong and have good self-discipline. They are eager to accept responsibility for jobs around school. In planning and organising fund raising events for charity, they also gain useful insights into the world of work. The school council ensures a strong voice for pupils and enables them to take part in decision making. This is enhanced by their involvement in the 'bully buster' initiative, which ensures that there is an agreed intolerance and plan of action for any form of oppressive behaviour.

The school provides many opportunities for children to learn about keeping safe and fit and to understand the importance of healthy diets. Children learn to work independently and, from the reception class upwards, they collaborate well with each other.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall: there is some good and outstanding practice and also some areas for development. Lessons have clear aims and pupils know what they are expected to learn. Behaviour management is very effective; consequently pupils develop very positive attitudes to their learning. Praise and good relationships in class inspire them to work hard.

The new systems for assessment and of setting targets for learning, give teachers in years 1 to 6 a good understanding of the level of difficulty at which to pitch their lessons. Generally this is done well but, in some classes, the routine tasks promote only basic progress as pupils are not fully challenged all of the time. Those children who are known to find learning hard are given good help, often from well trained teaching assistants, and they do well. There is skilled class and group teaching in the reception class and balanced coverage of all areas of learning. The teacher is well aware

of the need to provide a continuous range of activities so that children can apply the skills they are acquiring.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. A broad range of rich and varied activities develop pupils' academic, creative, personal and physical talents. Subject planning provides good opportunities for pupils to practise the basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology.

The curriculum for children with learning difficulties meets their needs well and, with their parents, they have a good say in planning their work. Those with behavioural difficulties benefit from the expert support of a mentor as well as a sensitive but firm approach in helping them cope with the conventions of school life.

The school provides a good range of out of school activities, including sports coaching and weekend orienteering sessions. The curriculum is further enriched by the wide range of visitors to the school and by many visits out of school to places of educational interest. Links within the community, such as those with local churches, help to broaden pupils' experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and this fact is appreciated by parents. Their health, safety and protection are seen as paramount. Procedures for risk assessments and child protection are thorough and proven to be effective. Staff know children well and provide a useful programme for personal development. There are high expectations of behaviour and pupils are well aware of the agreed school rules. Relationships are good and children are confident to approach adults if they experience problems.

Guidance for individuals on how to improve their work is increasingly effective in English where pupils have targets to aim for. A similar system is about to be introduced in mathematics. Teachers give good help and advice through marking and oral feedback in lessons. Pupils also have opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work and this is helping to develop good skills of independent study. Pupils who have gifts and talents across the curriculum are recognised and a programme of special activities is being developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own evaluation that leadership and management are satisfactory with several good aspects. After a protracted period of staffing instability, the school is now moving forward under the good leadership and management of the headteacher and the work of senior and middle managers. Developments include: better progress and attainment over the last year, improved

monitoring of provision and strong teamwork among all staff, based on a shared vision of raising standards. There is good capacity for further improvements. Through its self-evaluation schedule, the school has a clear idea of what needs to be done and has a detailed plan of action. The impact of improvements to provision is already being seen in raised standards and improved progress with more pupils attaining the higher levels in English and mathematics. The school is well aware of the potential to raise them further.

A high standard of care is achieved and good personal development is promoted; all groups of pupils have equal access to all that the school offers. The governors provide sound support for the headteacher and are taking up training opportunities in order to extend their active involvement further. All statutory requirements are met. Resources are effectively deployed and value for money is satisfactory.

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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?	3	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	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	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	3	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?	3	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?	2	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	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	3	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

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Northern Primary School

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8 December 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave myself and Mr Earley when we recently visited your school. The conversations that we had with groups and individuals were very interesting and we enjoyed watching you at work.

There are lots of things that we think are good at your school. Some of them are:

you enjoy the good range of lessons and extra activities that your teachers plan for you and work hard

you behave well and are polite and friendly

your teachers take great care to keep you happy and healthy

you contribute well to the running of the school through your council members.

Your teachers work hard to make your lessons interesting and we know that you are now doing better with your learning. We think that you can achieve even higher standards and have asked the staff to help you do so. In particular we have asked them to make sure that work always meets your needs all of the time. We think this will add to your enjoyment of lessons since you like a good challenge.

Thank you once again for helping us so much with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Mrs L Read

(Lead inspector)