



Ribbleton Avenue Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119235
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280502
Inspection dates 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Ribbleton Avenue
School category	Community		Preston
Age range of pupils	3 to 7		Lancashire, PR1 5RU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01772 796037
Number on roll	220	Fax number	01772 796037
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr S Niven
Date of previous inspection	3 July 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S List

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school that serves an area of social deprivation. There are high levels of unemployment and a high percentage of children entitled to free school meals. The school has a richly diverse population. The largest groups of children are of white British, Indian and Pakistani heritage. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low, particularly in language and social development. There are above average proportions of children for whom English is an additional language and of children who have special educational needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors and the school judge overall effectiveness to be good. The school gives good value for money. In the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception), children make good progress from the very low standards seen when they enter nursery. They achieve most in communication and social development. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are well below average. By the age of 7, standards are below average. Test results have been improving in recent years. However, early indications are that they dipped in 2005, particularly for the higher attaining children in writing. Nevertheless, many children exceeded the challenging targets set for them.

Overall, children have achieved well. All minority groups make good progress because of: good teaching by a strong staff who have a wide range of expertise; a broad curriculum that interests the children and develops well their knowledge, basic skills and understanding; good, ambitious and knowledgeable leadership and management that put the diverse needs of the children first; and high quality social care.

As a result, children have a good grounding in the academic and social skills needed to do well later in life. Personal development is good and a very large proportion of the children make very good relationships with adults and other children. The school is not content to rest on its laurels and continues to improve. It knows itself well, and is very successful at minimising the many barriers to children's learning. All children, regardless of gender, race or disability, have the opportunity to take part in all that the school has to offer.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the recent developments in tracking children's progress and achievements.

Improve standards, particularly in writing for the higher attaining children by:

- increasing the amount of writing done in the full range of subjects
- setting challenging targets for writing that are clear to the children and easy for them to find and remember
- marking work in such a way that progress towards children's individual targets is clear and the next stage of development is obvious.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that children make good progress. Children start the Foundation Stage with extremely weak basic skills and, by the time they enter Year 1, standards have improved, though they are still well below average. Nevertheless, all the different groups respond well to the good teaching and exemplary social care. As a result, children make good progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy, and in personal, social and emotional development.

By the end of Year 2, standards are below average. Nevertheless, progress is good and most basic skills continue to develop well. Children's skills in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and information and communication technology improve strongly. The quality of children's writing is improving at a slower rate because of shortcomings in the curriculum and teaching. The school is aware of this and is already starting to make improvements. In the 2005 national tests, results were lower than in the previous two years, particularly for the higher attaining children in writing. Nevertheless, they mainly exceeded the challenging targets set for them. Girls do better than boys.

Children from minority ethnic backgrounds, those learning English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are all making good progress. This has much to do with the specific skills of teachers and assistants, for example, those who are bilingual, and the work of the learning mentor.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that personal development and well being are good. Children enjoy school and feel safe and secure. The school has successfully improved attendance to national average levels. Most children behave very well because of the successful development of their social skills. Children are polite, and increasingly confident and independent.

Children are generally keen and eager to work hard. Their efforts in class and their kindness and consideration to others are rightly celebrated and rewarded. This increases their self-esteem. Boys occasionally lose interest in what they are doing and their standards slip. The school is aware of this and specific provision is made for them. Children know what keeps them fit and healthy. They eat fruit, drink milk and work and play safely. Children make good progress in learning most of the basic skills that will help them later in life. They are actively encouraged to help with the smooth running of the school and to be helpful to others.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Children have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong, and a secure knowledge of how to live together in a diverse community. They gain an understanding of racial equality through their ability to celebrate the wide cultural heritage of the school's population.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Inspectors and the school judge teaching and learning as good. In the Foundation Stage, the well-planned range of practical activities ensures that the children are interested and make good progress. Children learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are identified early and supported well by teachers and support staff. The school recognises that boys do not do as well as girls.

As a result, teaching and resources have been thoughtfully adjusted so that boys' needs are better catered for.

Across the school, teachers are skilful, knowledgeable, sensitive and challenging. As a result, children develop satisfactory basic skills in speaking, listening, reading and numeracy. They have self-confidence, because relationships are very good and children know they are valued. Notably, even the most reticent children are drawn into the lesson by good questioning. Children have good habits, such as working hard and concentrating for long periods.

In most respects, teachers assess work thoroughly so that children know what they need to do next in order to improve. However, in writing, there is too little use of individual learning targets. Consequently, the marking does not give a clear picture to the child of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Recent developments in the tracking of children's achievements are being carried out, but it is too early to assess the impact.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that the curriculum is good. All legal requirements are met. All groups of children, including those in the Foundation Stage, benefit equally from a broad programme that is enriched by a very wide range of activities outside lessons, and an effective programme of visits and visitors. The programme contributes well to children's knowledge and understanding of health and safety issues.

Most basic skills are used widely in other subjects and develop children's ability to learn for themselves. However, the school has rightly identified the need to extend and improve writing skills through their wider use in other subjects, and to improve opportunities for outdoor play in reception in order to build on the existing good practice.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it shows good care for all its children. In fact, the attention the school gives to the social needs of children from diverse backgrounds is exemplary. Excellent links with outside agencies ensure that needy children benefit from a wide range of expertise. The procedures and practices for child protection and risk assessments are good. The rigorous monitoring of behaviour, attendance and individual needs has led to great improvements in children's confidence and maturity, and in rates of attendance. Children's welfare is further safeguarded by the way that the school works closely with the neighbouring junior school. For example, at no extra cost to parents, a well-attended joint breakfast club gives a good start to the day,

helps to improve attendance and punctuality, and fosters a smooth transition to the next stage of education.

Good procedures exist for helping children settle who join the school after the start of the year. The work of bilingual staff is important in this.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school views leadership and management as satisfactory. However, inspectors judge them to be good. The senior leadership team are strongly focused on raising standards and ensuring the well-being of all children. The headteacher successfully leads all staff in lowering barriers to children's learning. There are excellent links with outside agencies, including the neighbouring junior school. As a result, it is no surprise that parents overwhelmingly agree that the school is well led and managed.

Despite going through a lengthy period of instability, the school has maintained the very strong drive, focus, morale and shared will to continue improving. The headteacher is rightly sensitive and knowledgeable about the wide range of needs and pressures in the school's diverse area. Rigorous checking gives the headteacher and senior team a good awareness of the school's strengths and shortcomings. There is no complacency. Improvement planning is very detailed and comprehensive. However, main priorities need to be emphasised more strongly so that everyone has a clear picture of the school's future direction.

The governing body is fully involved, highly committed and supportive. Governors have much valuable expertise that is used for the benefit of learners and staff. Financial management is good and the school puts children's needs first when allocating expenditure. Consequently, staffing levels are being maintained, particularly among support workers. Accommodation and resources are good.

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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?	1	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	4	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	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?	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?	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?	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	2	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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Ribbleton Avenue Infant School
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19 October 2005

Dear Children,

The inspectors thoroughly enjoyed being in your school this week. It has been a privilege and a pleasure for us to work with you and the staff of the school. We were delighted that many of you wished to talk with us and we were impressed by the courtesy and help you provided.

What we really liked about your school:

the way you work hard and do well in your reading and mathematics lessons

your good behaviour and the very good way that you get on with each other and the adults you share your school with

the really good opinions that your parents have of the school

all the trips, visitors and activities outside lessons that help to make your learning more interesting and enjoyable

the very good care that all adults in the school give you, and the way that you are making sure that you come to school more often

the strong way that Mrs List runs the school with the help of the teachers and other staff.

What we have asked your teachers to make better:

the way that you do your writing. We are asking your teachers to give you targets that will help you to know how well you are writing and what you need to do to write even better. We are also asking them to let you write more in the work you do in topics. You can be really helpful in all of this by making sure that you always do your very best work and by trying really hard to follow the advice given by your teacher

we are also asking your teachers to continue improving the work they are doing in keeping track of all the things you do in your lessons and in your books.

We wish you well for the future and good luck to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mr Heap

Lead inspector

Annex B