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## Inspection Report

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**Better  
education  
and care**

**Unique Reference Number** 119280  
**LEA** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 280514  
**Inspection dates** 31 January 2006 to 1 February 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Eric Jackson

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>	Linden Lea
<b>School category</b>	Community		Rawtenstall
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Rosendale, Lancashire
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01706 215233
<b>Number on roll</b>	157	<b>Fax number</b>	01706 215233
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Nick Pilling
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 January 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Graham Porter

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<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 31 January 2006 - 1 February 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280514
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Balladen is a smaller than average primary school. A higher than average proportion of children is eligible for free school meals. Children's attainment at entry varies year-on-year from below average to broadly average. There are small numbers of children from minority ethnic groups, or in public care. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need. The number of children leaving or joining the school during the year is less than average, but varies year-on-year. The headteacher was absent due to illness during the inspection, and there were two temporary teachers in junior classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in the standards reached by the end of Year 6, and in aspects of leadership and management.

The school has suffered from a lack of clear direction for some years, and governors have not held the school sufficiently to account for overall standards, achievement and the quality of education offered. The school has improved in some areas since the last inspection, but it has declined overall. Inspection findings that the school is causing concern do not reflect the school's view that it is satisfactory. It does not provide satisfactory value for money.

However, in the headteacher's absence, senior staff have led and managed the school well recently, working with the local authority. Improved teaching for children in Years 3 to 6 has led to measurably better progress than in the recent past. The school's capacity to improve under the clear direction of the acting headteacher and other senior staff is now good. Quality and standards in the Reception class are outstanding, and children generally achieve well in Years 1 and 2. However, standards by the end of Year 6 have been too low for the last three years, and children's achievement across Years 3 to 6 has been unsatisfactory. This decline has begun to be reversed recently. Children's personal development is now good, despite the low standards in Year 6 in the recent past. Children behave well, work hard, and say that they 'really enjoy school.' Care, support and guidance are good, and children are safe and well looked after. This is welcomed by parents, who support the school strongly.

### What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science by building effectively on children's earlier achievements
- use information about children's performance to set challenging targets for their further progress, and to plan effective learning opportunities to enable them to reach or exceed predicted targets by the end of Year 6
- governors should work more closely with the headteacher and other senior staff to monitor the overall standards and provision.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Standards have been low at the end of Year 6 for three years because children's achievement from Years 3 to 6 has been unsatisfactory. Standards by the end of Year 2 were above average overall in 2005, and are generally above those in similar schools, representing good achievement. Achievement is outstanding in Reception. Almost all

children reach the expected goals, and a high proportion exceeds them. In 2005, results in Year 6 national tests were among the lowest nationally and when compared with those in similar schools. Modest targets were missed and many children did not achieve their potential. Almost two in three children did not reach the level expected for their age in mathematics, and none reached the higher level. Potentially higher attaining children achieved poorly between Year 2 and Year 6, although those with learning difficulties made satisfactory progress. The school's attempts to deal with the unsatisfactory behaviour of a few children in this class were ineffective. The school's leaders took insufficient action to improve the children's progress, or their learning opportunities. Following recent changes, progress is at least satisfactory currently across the school: it is outstanding in Reception, and good in some lessons from Year 1 to Year 6. Children currently in Year 6 are on track to achieve the targets set, with higher attaining children well placed to achieve higher than expected levels. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those in care, and those learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being are good. The staff's friendly teamwork provides a good model in how to work together, helping the children to develop their social skills well. Children behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral and cultural development is also promoted well. Children say that they enjoy what the school offers. Reception children certainly joined in a 'Bear Hunt' with great excitement and commitment! One parent said, 'The children are enthusiastic about their work and want to attend.' Attendance is satisfactory, exceeding the targets set by the local authority. Children are very safe, and learn healthy lifestyles satisfactorily through healthy eating and opportunities for exercise. The School Council helps its members to contribute to the community effectively, as do the many jobs and responsibilities children take on, such as older children 'buddying' children in Reception. Children learn to work together successfully, and acquire an improving level of basic skills that will help them in their working lives satisfactorily.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Reception, the high quality of the learning environment is matched by the creativity and enthusiasm of the teaching. Children make good progress because they are excited and involved. In Years 1 and 2 there is an effective focus in lessons on developing children's skills in English, mathematics and science. Occasionally, whole-class sessions last too long, slowing the pace of learning. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 to 5, and good in Year 6. The focus on involving children in understanding what they need to do to improve is clear in

teachers' marking. Older children say that much of their work has been 'easy' in the past. Now, there is a busy air of purpose, and all staff promote good working relationships, helping lessons to flow as children settle quickly to their work. Nevertheless, not enough use is made of the information from assessment to ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging for all groups of children. The support available for children with learning difficulties is used wisely to help them meet their agreed individual targets.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is excellent in Reception, supported superbly by a stimulating outdoor classroom. In Years 1 to 6, there is a strong focus on English, mathematics and science, and teachers have benefited from help and advice provided by local authority consultants to help them improve the curriculum. Teachers are beginning to link subjects to make learning more meaningful, and improve methods to develop children's investigational and experimental skills. However, there has not yet been enough response to recent national initiatives to develop excellence and enjoyment. The curriculum for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved, and there are well-drawn plans to extend the children's use of ICT. Enrichment is satisfactory, and there is a good range of extracurricular activities.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff's commitment to the children's welfare and well-being is clear. One parent described them as, 'Caring people who have time for children.' The peaceful learning environment helps children to persevere when they are finding things difficult. Important areas such as risk assessment and child protection are taken seriously, but there is also vigilance and attention to detail in the smooth day-to-day running of the school. Vulnerable children are identified quickly, support provided, and careful checks made on their security. The focus on improving assessment for learning is having good effect. Children appreciate the thoroughness of the staff's marking, and say that they increasingly know what to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership has been insufficiently focused on raising standards and achievement by the end of

Year 6. The wealth of assessment data available showing how children progress from year to year has not been used effectively to tackle low standards or hold teachers to account for children's progress. Important areas of self-evaluation have been inaccurate until very recently, with judgements that do not fit the evidence. Indeed, until very recently, parents and governors had not been directly informed that standards in Year 6 were a serious cause for concern. Too little consultation has taken place with

interested parties to ensure accuracy in the school's own evaluation of its performance and provision.

However, the quality and standards in Reception have been maintained at high levels, and good progress has been sustained in Years 1 and 2. The quality of leadership provided here has been good, but has not influenced the rest of the school sufficiently. There has also been a lack of rigour in how senior staff and governors have challenged what they suspected was inaccurate information and weak leadership. Support and advice from the local authority have resulted in significant improvements in leadership and management recently. There is still a long way to go, but staff morale is high and many areas of the school's work are developing encouragingly. Notwithstanding the past weaknesses, the school is currently well placed to make the necessary changes to bring about needed improvements.

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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>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	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	3	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	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	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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

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Linden Lea

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2 February 2006

Dear Children

Mr Oglesby, Mr Boyle and I want to thank you very much for looking after us so well when we visited your school. I have not recovered yet from being chased by a bear in that lovely Reception class. The children in the infants are lucky to have such an exciting outdoor classroom (so long as there are no bears!).

You know that we have to check how well your school helps you to learn. The staff certainly look after you well, and make sure that you are safe. You told us that you enjoy the school very much, and your parents said the same. In fact, your parents told us how good the school is at welcoming new children and helping them to settle down. We agree.

We have asked your school to help those of you in the juniors to make better progress in your learning. Some of you told us that you found your work easy. We have asked the staff to expect you to build more quickly on what you already know. You might find that your work stretches you a bit more! This is so that by the time you leave the school, nearly all of you will have reached the levels you should, and those of you who can will have gone on to higher levels. You can help the staff to help you by trying as hard as you can, and striving to reach your targets. We have also asked the senior staff and governors to keep a closer eye on what goes on in the school, to make sure it is as good as it can be. You might find that some of the governors ask you what you think. You can help by being honest in what you tell them.

With best wishes for your future, yours sincerely

Eric Jackson (Lead Inspector), Keith Oglesby (Additional Inspector).