

Booker Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104593
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	286984
Inspection dates	6–7 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Allan Torr HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	230
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs E Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Booker Avenue Liverpool Merseyside L18 9SB
Telephone number	0151 724 1997
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Age group	4–7
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Booker Avenue is a very large infant school. It shares a campus with the neighbouring junior school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is half the national average. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Most pupils are White British but the proportion of pupils with a Chinese heritage is double the national average. Booker Avenue is part of the School Sport Partnership initiative and has gained a number of awards including Healthy School status, the Information and Communication Technology award (ICT), and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Booker Avenue is a good school and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of its work. 'It is such a welcoming, happy, community school' and 'the teachers and headteacher are always available for any issues that arise and are very supportive in all areas' are typical of parents' comments. The school runs smoothly and has a calm, friendly atmosphere.

Good leadership and management are key factors contributing to the school's success. The headteacher and deputy headteacher share a sustained focus on getting the best from pupils. Pupils' achievement in relation to their starting points is good overall because of good teaching and a well planned curriculum. Children enter the Reception year with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They get off to a flying start in the Reception classes and make good progress because exciting activities are designed to enable children to learn precise skills or knowledge. By the time they enter Year 1, they have skills and knowledge above those expected for their age. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards above the local and national averages, having made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Teaching and learning are good overall. In all classes, interactive whiteboards and other resources are used well to illustrate key teaching points. Pupils are generally enthusiastic learners who respond well to their teachers. Nevertheless, in Key Stage 1, when working independently, pupils are often set tasks that are uninspiring. In these lessons, there is not enough opportunity for pupils to think, explain their reasons or to use and apply their skills.

The curriculum is broad and based on the development of skills. The headteacher and staff revised the curriculum to add interesting and effective ways to inspire boys' learning. Recent links to the British Film Institute, for example, worked well in motivating boys to write and, as a result, standards in 2007 were well above the national average. A very good range of additional activities, which contributes to pupils' enjoyment and interests, enriches the curriculum. This includes cooking, French, ICT, art and football. In addition, multi-skills activities, which are designed to develop pupils' strength, speed, agility, coordination and endurance are hugely popular.

Good care, guidance and support contribute significantly to pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils with a learning difficulty and/or disability attain well above the national average and make good progress because their needs are assessed and diagnosed very early. The school has excellent systems to assess and track pupils' attainment and so teachers have a good overview of how well each pupil is doing. Assessment information, however, is not summarised or evaluated enough to set precise school improvement priorities. Teachers do devise precise teaching programmes to tackle any areas of underachievement. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. There are some outstanding features such as pupils' attendance, contribution to the community and understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils eat healthily; they lead an active lifestyle and take regular exercise including the daily 'wake and shake' sessions. Members of the school council take their responsibilities seriously and they are actively involved in the future development of the school. They have, for example, placed orders for new playground equipment. Good relationships with adults and positive rewards lead to behaviour which is usually good.

All leaders make a valuable contribution to the school's effectiveness and to school improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate and the findings are used well to guide planning for improvement and to set challenging targets. Improvements to the Foundation Stage, to ICT provision and

to results in writing demonstrate a good capacity to improve further. The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school. Governors are proactive, for example, by setting up a marketing committee to attract more children into the school. They are committed to providing good support and constructive challenge.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed by the deputy headteacher. Very good systems are in place for assessing individual children and tracking their progress. These are then used by teachers to plan lessons based on precise learning outcomes. The information, however, is not summarised or evaluated enough to enable staff to identify and prioritise improvements. The curriculum meets well the needs and interests of children. A good feature is the way the children have an input into what is taught. In one example, children were interested in 'do it yourself' and learnt how to paste wallpaper to the wall. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve outdoor provision which is now good. Children work on tasks that are an extension of the work being done in classrooms. For example, children looked at patterns in the classroom and those working outside used digital cameras to record patterns they found in the environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' tasks and their independent learning so that pupils have more opportunity to use, apply and extend their skills in lessons.
- Make better use of assessment information to identify and sharpen priorities for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most children enter Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. In response to very careful, early identification of their needs, good quality teaching and an exciting curriculum, they make good progress throughout Reception. By the time they enter Year 1 the majority of children exceed expectations for their age, particularly in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, standards are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost every pupil attains Level 2, as expected for their age, and one third attain the higher Level 3. Standards are slightly higher in English than they are in mathematics. This is because in mathematics lessons there is sometimes a lack of challenge. Writing skills have improved for the last three years partly as a result of the introduction of initiatives to motivate and interest boys. In the 2007 assessments, boys' writing was well above the national average. The involvement in the school sport partnership initiative is a factor in pupils' high levels of physical development. Pupils also reach above age expectations in science and in ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect on spiritual and moral topics in assemblies where they are encouraged to provide ideas and suggestions. They have time to reflect and to consider their own actions and those of others. In one lesson, for example, pupils were asked to think about the First World War and understand the concept of sorrow. Pupils reflect on those less fortunate than themselves through their involvement in

charitable fundraising such as the shoe-box appeal and raising money for Barnardos. Pupils are active and eat healthily. They drink water and participate in games and physical activity during after-school clubs. Pupils feel safe and secure because they are well cared for. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe: in one science lesson, for example, they knew the dangers of electricity and touching plug sockets. They have someone to go to if they feel troubled.

Pupils usually behave well and enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their attendance which is well above the national average. In some lessons, however, when tasks are dull and uninspiring, pupils' enjoyment is only satisfactory. In these lessons, children become disengaged and this leads to some messing about. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community. They readily take on jobs and positions of responsibility in the school such as playground pals, school councillors and class monitors. In one example, class monitors demonstrated how to line up for the rest of the class to follow their example. Pupils also make very good contributions to the local community by being involved in community projects and competitions.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan lessons that are based on pupils' prior learning. In the majority of lessons, teachers share and explain learning objectives so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn. Resources, including individual whiteboards, number lines and digital cameras, are used well to extend and support pupils' learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and explanations to pupils are clear. The teachers use skilful questioning to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding. In particular there is good teaching of phonics and early reading skills. Consequently, pupils make good progress in reading. In a large number of lessons, there is an over-reliance on giving pupils worksheets to complete in independent tasks. Many of these sheets are uninspiring. This hinders progress because pupils are not required to use, apply or extend their knowledge and skills. Marking and assessment are satisfactory. Although pupils receive comments and praise about what they have done there is little advice given about what they need to do in the next lesson to improve. Pupils who are at an early stage of learning English and those with a learning difficulty and/or disability make good progress. This is because they are taught well and supported by able teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is enriched by a very good range of extra activities and clubs. Pupils' suggestions are used to plan extra activities. One after-school activity, for example, was designed for pupils with physical needs. Visitors to the school are used well to add specialist teaching, extra interest and variety to pupils' experiences. Sport coaches as a part of the school sport partnership initiative enhance the school's physical education curriculum. As a result, many pupils continue the activities out of school. Teachers make good use of events in the community to enliven the curriculum. For example, children were involved in a project connected to Liverpool's City of Culture celebrations. They made scarecrows depicting local celebrities which were then exhibited in a city centre museum.

In Reception, the curriculum is very good. There is a strong focus on early reading skills and on number and counting. Children are provided with a well balanced programme of indoor and

outdoor activities which are crafted to ensure that pupils make progress in meeting specific objectives. Imaginative and challenging opportunities in other areas of the Reception curriculum capture the interest of pupils so they are excited and fully engaged in tasks. In Key Stage 1, national schemes of work are adapted well to make links between subjects. For example, a topic on light and dark in science was linked to one about festivals in religious education and history. Opportunities, however, for pupils to develop and extend their interests through research and open-ended tasks are limited.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a safe, caring and supportive environment. Risk assessments and health and safety procedures, including those concerned with safeguarding pupils, meet statutory requirements. Assessment and tracking systems are used well by teachers to take effective action in cases where pupils are not doing as well as they could. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. Although pupils have targets for improvement which are shared with parents, pupils do not know what they are and they do not always know what they need to do to improve their work. Induction procedures into the Reception and into Key Stage 2 enable pupils to make smooth progress between the different phases in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides good leadership and manages well the smooth running of the school. School self-evaluation is good overall. It is well founded on systematic monitoring of the quality of teaching and of the results from national assessments at the end of Year 2. A very good assessment and tracking system enables senior leaders to monitor pupils' progress frequently. This enables realistic but challenging targets to be set, which the school exceeded in 2007. Together with subject leaders, senior leaders monitor standards and pupils' achievement by observing lessons, scrutinising planning and pupils' work and by talking to small groups of pupils. This leads to the setting of clear priorities and direction in the school improvement plan. There is, however, insufficient evaluation or summary of assessment information about the progress of pupils currently in the school. Some priorities for improvement are no longer appropriate. Some success criteria in action plans are not sharp enough which means governors and other leaders are not able to measure success precisely. Middle leaders know their subjects and areas of responsibility well. Consequently, the management of curriculum subjects has resulted in a balanced programme of activities for pupils based on the development of skills and understanding.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Booker Avenue Infant School, Liverpool, L18 9SB

It was good to meet and speak to so many of you when we visited your school to see how well you were learning. It was particularly interesting to see some of the work you were doing to commemorate 'Poppy day'. We agree with you that Booker Avenue Infants is a good school and there are some things about the school that are even better than good.

- Your understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle is excellent.
- Your attendance at school is outstanding. Very few of you take any time off!
- You make very good contributions to the school and local community.
- Lessons in the Reception classes help you to get a flying start in your learning.

It is good that you are so keen to go to the many clubs and activities such as cookery, ICT, multi-skills, rugby, football and hockey.

We have asked the governors, Mrs Gibson and the teachers to do two main things to improve your school.

- Give you work that helps you to use and extend your skills.
- Use data better to decide on the most important things in the school that need to be improved.

You can help your teachers by telling them if you find the work too easy and what you think could be better.

We wish you all the best for the future.