

Church Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105152
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	287137
Inspection dates	12–13 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Margot D'Arcy

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nm Crook
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Hurst
Date of previous school inspection	7 October 2002
School address	Captains Clough Road Bolton Lancashire BL1 5RU
Telephone number	01204 332777
Fax number	01204 497457

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

This school is situated on the outskirts of Bolton. The school is larger than average but the number of pupils on roll is falling, due mainly to the changing population in the area. As such, the school has been subject to reorganisation proposals and from September 2007 the admission number will reduce from 60 to 30. Most pupils are White British. The number from minority ethnic groups is increasing. Around 10% are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is slightly above average. On entry to the Nursery, children's standards are in line with what is expected for their age. Children who enter the Reception class come from the school's own Nursery and from a range of other providers. Overall, attainment on entry to Reception is also broadly average. The school has achieved the Healthy School Award.

The school has suffered some significant disruption to staffing in recent years, including at leadership level. At the time of the inspection there was no substantive headteacher or deputy headteacher. Following the unexpected resignation of the school's headteacher in April this year, the local authority seconded a headteacher from a local school to lead and manage the school. This arrangement is in place until December this year, with the executive headteacher in school each day for half a day. The executive headteacher is being supported by the school's assistant headteacher and a deputy headteacher, who has also been seconded from another local school. Both of these individuals are also employed at the school on a part-time basis. The school's own assistant headteacher is currently on maternity leave and is to be seconded to another school in September 2007. This is to enable this school to deal with a significant deficit budget resulting mainly from surplus staffing due to the falling roll.

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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Pupils' achievement is inadequate. When they leave the school at the end of Year 6 their standards are broadly average but should be higher. Pupils are not attaining as well as they should because their progress is uneven in different key stages, year groups and subjects. There are also differences in the rate of progress for different groups of pupils. These variations are mainly the result of inconsistencies in teaching, the overall quality of which is inadequate. Pupils' underachievement has been evident for some time. Whilst improvements have occurred, these have not been sufficient to allow all pupils to progress at the rate of which they are capable. Some pupils continue to underachieve and a legacy of past underachievement is not being eradicated sufficiently well. At Key Stage 2, progress in English is better than in mathematics and science. In English, most pupils achieve satisfactorily, but the more able pupils could do better. This group of pupils also underachieves in science. In mathematics, pupils underachieve at both the expected level and above. Children in the Foundation Stage make a very good start to their education because of high quality teaching and a good curriculum. They achieve well and reach above-average standards by the end of the Reception year.

Teaching is inadequate because the quality varies so significantly across the school. Whilst some teaching is good and outstanding, most is not better than satisfactory, and inadequate teaching is a continuing feature. The most significant weakness is in the level of challenge provided to pupils, especially the more able. This limits pupils' academic progress and affects their personal standards, such as their attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' standards of personal development and well-being are satisfactory. However, in some lessons their attention dips and some begin to misbehave because they are insufficiently motivated or challenged. Pupils' opinions on school are mixed. Whilst the majority say that they like school, in too many lessons there is a clear lack of enthusiasm for learning. Pupils are aware of how to live healthily and stay safe and many show a mature understanding of the need to respect each other and form good relationships. There is some concern, however, among pupils and their parents, that the behaviour of some pupils spoils things for others. Attendance is unsatisfactory. Attendance fell to below the national average last year and has fallen further this year. Strategies to monitor and improve attendance are insufficiently rigorous.

The curriculum is satisfactory, with some strengths in the way it provides for pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The level of care, guidance and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. Staff know pupils and their families well. They are especially patient with and supportive of pupils with behavioural difficulties and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Parents appreciate the strengths in the school's pastoral approach and, overall, express support for the school. Understandably, however, many expressed concern about the impact of staffing disruptions, behaviour issues and the uncertainty about the future leadership of the school. Where parents made very positive comments about their children's education, these coincided with inspection evidence of where teaching and other provision was good or better.

The quality of leadership and management is inadequate. Key leaders only work part-time and the leadership structure is temporary, awaiting the appointment of a permanent headteacher. A senior leadership team from the school's own staff has yet to be put in place. The executive headteacher has worked closely with the assistant headteacher and seconded deputy. Together they have a generally accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their view of the school's overall effectiveness, pupils' achievement and some aspects of provision are, however, too positive at this stage. The executive headteacher has some excellent ideas about how to raise standards, and improve provision and the quality of leadership and management. He has quickly gained the confidence of staff, parents and pupils. However, he has not been at the school long enough for many of his ideas to go beyond the planning stage and, of those that have been implemented, the impact has yet to be seen. An exception is in relation to strategies to improve the management of inappropriate behaviour, which are now much sharper. Governors are committed to the school, but are not sufficiently informed about pupils' standards and achievement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science, particularly that of more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, eradicating inadequate teaching and increasing significantly the proportion of good teaching.
- Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Achievement is inadequate. Although standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average, they are not high enough, given pupils' starting points. There is a spread of attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes, but overall this is average. Nursery children achieve well in all areas and this good rate of progress continues in Reception. By the end of the Reception year most children have attained the expected learning goals. Progress during Key Stage 1 is uneven, ranging from good to inadequate. A period of significant underachievement was stemmed last year, resulting in Year 2 pupils' standards rising to a broadly average level. This year, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is similar. However, underachievement has not been completely eradicated and standards should be higher, especially in writing and mathematics. A similar picture is evident at Key Stage 2. Where there are strengths in teaching pupils make up lost ground and progress increases. It slips back, however, when teaching is inadequate. Although the most significant underachievement at this key stage is in mathematics and science, there is scope for pupils to do better in English, especially the more able. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in response to the additional support they receive. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language are not progressing as quickly as they could.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. In assemblies, pupils reflect thoughtfully on issues and show respect and appreciation for each other's efforts, for example, the singing from the choir. Pupils do their best to abide by the school's rules. They

recognise that these are there to keep them safe and ensure they get on well with each other. Pupils' enjoyment of school is satisfactory. Favourite subjects tend to be practical ones, such as art, music and sport. Pupils are less enthusiastic about subjects where 'we have to do a lot of writing'. They also say that they are sometimes bored at playtimes because there is little for them to do. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to stay safe. Most say that bullying is dealt with effectively. They think most pupils behave well but explain, 'some are naughty and mess about in lessons'. Pupils have good knowledge of how to keep healthy and can explain the importance of a balanced diet and exercise. They are proud to have achieved the Healthy Schools Award. Within the relatively limited range of opportunities pupils have to take responsibility and show initiative, they contribute satisfactorily to their school and the wider community, for example, in raising funds to improve medical care for children who are ill. Pupils' standards in basic skills and personal development prepare them satisfactorily for the future. Children in the Foundation Stage love coming to school. They have excellent attitudes to learning, develop good social skills and very good work habits.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent throughout the school. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching ranges from inadequate to good, but with too little of the latter. Where teaching is good, the range of pupils' needs is catered for well and the pace of learning is brisk. Typically, however, teaching does not provide enough challenge for more able pupils and the work they are given differs little from that provided for others. Too often teachers do not expect enough of pupils in relation to what they are capable of attaining or the amount of work they could complete in lessons. These weaknesses are evident in inadequate lessons and, to a lesser extent, in lessons that are satisfactory overall. Inadequate teaching is perpetuating underachievement and there is not enough good teaching to enable pupils who have underachieved in the past to catch up. In the Foundation Stage teaching is good, with outstanding features. All staff here have a very good understanding of how young children learn and provide activities that are very well tailored to the children's needs. In Nursery, for example, excellent challenge was provided for the more able children in a practical mathematics activity that allowed them to develop counting skills and understand number order up to 25. The contribution of support staff, often in helping pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. Support staff in the Foundation Stage are particularly effective practitioners and make a very good contribution to teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides for most subjects satisfactorily. There are still some resource shortages in information and communication technology at Key Stage 2, but overall provision here has improved since the last inspection. The practice of linking subjects to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable is inconsistent, as is the promotion of basic skills across the curriculum. However, there are some good examples of artwork stemming from history and geography, and some effective use of numeracy skills in design and technology. Some specialist music tuition is provided, which pupils enjoy, and the introduction of French in some classes is also proving popular. The provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education makes a particularly good contribution to supporting pupils' understanding of how to keep healthy. A

satisfactory range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good curriculum. The focus on practical work and play ensures children learn successfully by using their senses to explore and discover.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Teachers show a good level of pastoral care for pupils. Requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. Staff know pupils well and many use effective strategies to manage behaviour. Pupils with learning difficulties and or/disabilities have comprehensive work programmes planned to meet their needs. Overall, teaching and support staff implement these satisfactorily. Links with parents and various support services are satisfactory. Staff provide sensitive and positive support for pupils who are learning to speak English. However, whilst there has been some staff training to meet this group's needs, the level of expertise to help them progress as well as they should is insufficient. There are systems to assess and monitor pupils' standards and achievement. However, the accuracy of some assessments is not secure and assessment information is not always used effectively to promote progress. Pupils are given improvement targets but their impact is variable depending on how well teachers promote pupils' understanding of these. The quality of guidance pupils are given through marking is also inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

With the support of the school's assistant headteacher, the executive headteacher has rapidly gained a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. He has the confidence of staff, parents, pupils and governors, many of whom are anxious about the school's position and seeking stability and improvements. The executive headteacher demonstrates a credible level of expertise and very good commitment to helping the school to improve. However, he has only been in position for a very short time. Whilst the strategies he proposes to move the school on seem well founded, it is too early to determine their impact. The temporary and underdeveloped nature of the school's leadership and management structure also show that the capacity to improve is tenuous and therefore inadequate.

Monitoring of the school's performance has not been rigorous at all levels. However, the range of quality of teaching has been recognised and some inadequate teaching dealt with. The effectiveness of subject and other co-ordinators is variable. The most successful impact has been in relation to improvements in the Foundation Stage and English. Instability in the co-ordination of mathematics and science has had a negative impact on standards and provision; co-ordination of mathematics remains unstable. Some monitoring of these subjects has occurred but the quality and impact are variable. The co-ordination of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is hampered because the responsible individual has not been given sufficient time to conduct this role. There are plans to address this next term. Governors are very committed to the school but much of their time has been focused on dealing with accommodation and financial issues. They are not sufficiently informed about standards and achievement and therefore have not challenged the school to account for its performance. Governors' minutes suggest that committees have not met for some time. Meetings are said to have taken place but records of the proceedings and decisions have not been kept.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Church Road Primary School, Bolton, BL1 5RU

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. I would like to share our judgements with you. We came to the decision that your school needs 'special measures'. This means that your school will get extra help to make sure it improves and provides you all with the education that you deserve. Inspectors will also make further visits to check that everything is going to plan.

On our visit we found that Nursery and Reception children were making good progress because they were being taught well and had lots of exciting things to do. In other parts of the school we found that, whilst your learning was good at times, not enough of you were learning as well as you could. We especially thought that those of you who learn new things quickly could achieve higher standards in English, mathematics and science. To make sure that this happens, we have asked your school to ensure that there are more good lessons to interest and challenge you. You can do your part to help by always trying hard, behaving well and attending school regularly. We found that not everyone comes to school regularly, so another thing we have asked your school to do is to improve attendance.

We were impressed at how much you all understood about keeping healthy. You behaved very well in assembly, listening to the choir and enjoying the lovely singing. You moved around the school sensibly and were very polite to the inspectors when you met us in the corridors and spoke to us in lessons and at other times. It was good to hear that you like your teachers and Mr Hurst. We know that you are keen to find out who is going to be your new headteacher and the governors are working hard to find the right person. We have asked the governors and leaders who are managing the school at the moment to keep working hard to make sure the school improves. We know that you will do your best to help them to make Church Road a good place to learn.

Best wishes for the future.