

Devonshire Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105154
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	287138
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Karen Ling 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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	389
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Barbara Porter
Headteacher	Mrs Margaret Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002
School address	Devonshire Road Bolton Lancashire BL1 4ND
Telephone number	01204 333614
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school which operates in challenging circumstances. The area it serves reflects a range of social and economic backgrounds. A high proportion of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Over 40% of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds with most speaking English as an additional language (EAL). A small but increasing number of pupils who attend are from overseas and are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is higher than the national average. The school was awarded 'Healthy School' status in 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school. It is a caring school in which positive relationships and good pastoral care effectively support pupils' personal development and well-being. The majority of parents and carers are positive about the work of the headteacher and staff. They are content that their children are happy there. One parent commented, 'Pupils accept and respect diversity' and this value underpins the work of the school.

The school makes good provision for music and sport activities. This contributes well to pupils fostering a healthy lifestyle and their enjoyment of school. Most pupils, though not all, demonstrate good attitudes and behaviour both in lessons and around the school. On occasions however, a small number of pupils can disrupt the learning of others and present unacceptable behaviour in the playground. Staff do not monitor the behaviour of these pupils well enough. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but a number of pupils arrive at school late each morning. This is monitored and parents are made aware of the importance of getting their children to school on time, but not enough is being done to curb the problem. The routine at the start of the day does not always happen in a timely manner to ensure that lessons begin promptly. Pupils are supported well as they move from one year group to the next and from primary to secondary school.

Most pupils join the school with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for their age. A significant minority join the school at different times during the primary years. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress although standards reached by seven year olds in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 2. Standards reached by 11 year olds are below average. However, in recent years standards in mathematics and science have improved and in 2006 the school achieved its best results in mathematics for some time. Standards are too low in English and the higher results achieved in 2005 were not maintained in 2006. Recent support from the local authority is having a positive impact on raising the quality of pupils work in science. However, this has not yet been well-established throughout the school. Pupils with EAL and those with LDD also make satisfactory progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. A concerted effort by managers and staff to improve the quality of teaching is bearing fruit and has increased the amount of good teaching. Teachers make adequate use of information and communication technology (ICT) in their lessons and pupils have access to an ICT suite to support learning. Pupils with EAL and those with LDD are well supported by teaching assistants and specialist teachers. Teachers' use of assessment is improving though it does not consistently lead to appropriate challenge for all pupils and some do not achieve as well as they should during lessons. Targets are set for pupils and at times they are involved in assessing the quality of their own work. The quality of marking by teachers is variable and pupils do not always receive enough guidance on how to improve their work.

The curriculum is good and a strong feature of the school's provision. Pupils participate in a wide range of curricular activities which include a particular focus on sport and music. Pupils are keen to take part in the forthcoming Bolton Music Festival and speak proudly of their sporting achievements. Provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is good. New leadership at Foundation Stage has improved the quality of provision in the Reception Year since the previous inspection and children get off to a good start in their school life. Children's personal,

social and emotional development is outstanding and as a result they have high levels of confidence and independence which prepares them well for future learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide a strong lead for the newly formed management team. Clearly defined roles have recently been established for the senior and middle leaders who have begun to be involved in the evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Self-evaluation is beginning to filter through to all staff and there is evidence of impact, for example in the improved quality of teaching. However, more emphasis needs to be given to monitoring pupils' progress during lessons and raising standards. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

- Raise standards in core subjects.
- Improve punctuality and ensure a timely routine at the start of the day so that lessons begin on time.
- Improve the management of behaviour.
- Ensure lesson planning takes account of the needs of all pupils so that all groups of learners achieve their capabilities.
- Ensure senior leaders form an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses in order to bring about improved provision for all learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children joining the Reception Year reflect a range of ability though a substantial number have language skills below those expected for their age. The teaching team for this year group were appointed in September 2006 and have created a stimulating and exciting provision where children make good progress. A good number are in line to achieve many of the age related goals by the end of Foundation Stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Standards reached at Key Stage 1 are below average. Test results in Key Stage 2 fluctuate from year to year remaining below average. However, standards in mathematics and science have improved in recent years. Teaching has become more effective in recent months and this is beginning to show in the improved standards of some work seen during the inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Overall, personal development is satisfactory, with good features. Pupils enjoy their lessons. However, punctuality is a continuing problem for some pupils and this means not all pupils get off to a good start in lessons. Classroom behaviour is very good where teaching is strong. Pupils are able to work cooperatively and some show high levels of independence. Most pupils are polite and helpful and courteous to visitors. However, some parents and children are rightly concerned about a small number of pupils who do not behave as well as they should. Pupils are well aware of what they must do to keep safe. However, some pupils say that they do not always feel safe in school despite the systems set up to support them, such as the 'Playground Friendship Stops'.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of healthy lifestyles. They make good use of a range of sporting activities available, choose healthy meal options and take part in a residential outdoor pursuit holiday. The school council takes an active role within the school and is responsible for organising and running fund-raising events.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school takes advantage of the ethnic diversity of its intake and this gives pupils a greater understanding of the multicultural world in which they live. Children are given time to reflect in assemblies and circle time and a strong focus on social and emotional aspects of learning ensures that pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Throughout the school relationships between teachers and the majority of pupils are positive. The effective use of praise and encouragement successfully promotes pupils' self-esteem and confidence. In the most effective lessons teachers' have good knowledge and understanding of the subject matter and are very clear about what they want pupils to achieve. They make good use of interactive whiteboards to assist in presenting subjects and showing visual explanations to enhance their lessons. The pace of their lessons is good and teachers ensure all pupils know exactly what they have to do and monitor their involvement and progress in completing tasks. The proportion of good teaching is improving and is evenly spread across the school.

Children get a good start in the Reception classes, where teachers provide exciting activities that develop pupils' confidence, knowledge and practical skills. A good balance is struck between practical, free choice activities and adult directed tasks. Assessment is used well to tailor activities to individual needs and help pupils move on to the next stage in their learning. Whilst the use of assessment in Key Stage 1 and 2 has improved significantly in guiding planning, teachers do not always set high enough expectations so that the needs of all learners, particularly the more able pupils, are met. The rigour of planning and focus on target setting has been an important factor in raising standards in mathematics at Key Stage 2, but it has not extended sufficiently to other subjects across the school. The quality of marking is improving and on occasions helps pupils to assess their own work. However, this is not yet a consistent feature in all classes. There is a good range of support for pupils with EAL and LDD. The contribution of teaching assistants in particular lessons is most valuable when lesson plans take into account how best they can help these pupils to achieve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and achievement. Provision for sport is enhanced by specialist teaching and pupils appreciate the range of sporting opportunities they can take part in. Music is a strength in the school and pupils are able to celebrate their talents in a variety of ways. Pupils get great pleasure from singing along to live music, from visiting bands and have opportunities to learn a musical instrument. The school choir performs at the annual Bolton Music Festival and Year 6 pupils have linked with Year 8 students from a local comprehensive to perform a rock and pop concert.

From Year 3 pupils begin to learn to speak French. A group observed during the inspection showed understanding as they correctly responded to instructions spoken in French. Facilities for ICT have been improved since the last inspection. ICT is being used well by pupils in a number of lessons. For example, a presentation in Power Point was used in Year 6 where pupils made it interesting with the use of prompts, images and photographs. Some pupils were able to explain how the use of the interactive whiteboard supports their learning. This is a skill that teachers and pupils are continuing to develop.

There is a range of extra-curricular activities, including table tennis and a fitness club, which are well supported by pupils.

In the Foundation Stage pupils are developing high levels of independence. The environment caters well for each area of learning. Effective use is made of the outdoor area to extend the curriculum and is accessed directly from the Reception Year classrooms.

Pupils requiring care outside of the normal school day are well supported. The school has established good links with provision for care before and after school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, with some good features. Clear procedures, together with good staff-pupil relationships, underpin the school's caring approach. Safeguarding policies are in place to protect pupils. Staff know what to do if they have concerns and the vast majority of pupils feel confident they can confide in a trusted adult. Younger pupils also value talking to older 'playground buddies'. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the care which their children receive. However, a small but not insignificant minority express concerns about the welfare of their children. In particular they refer to a small group of pupils, mainly, but not exclusively boys, whose poor behaviour affects the progress and safety of a small number of pupils.

Provision for pupils with LDD is good, as is support for the more vulnerable children and children with EAL. Generally, systems for supporting academic progress are satisfactory but lack high quality tracking procedures. Some pupils say they know what to do to improve their work but they are not always sure whether they are making as much progress as they should.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and this has ensured that the school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Overall key areas for improvement at that time have been met. There is a stronger focus on mental arithmetic at the start of numeracy sessions. ICT is used with increasing confidence by staff and pupils to enhance teaching and learning. Other aspects have moved on successfully. For example, improvements have been made in the quality of teaching across the school and the use of assessment to track progress is now in place. Governance is satisfactory. Governors meet regularly, are supportive of the school and fulfil their statutory duties. They are aware that improvements could be made to the way they hold the school to account for the quality of its provision.

Although senior and middle managers have an accurate picture of the school's general strengths and weaknesses, self-evaluation systems lack rigour and a clear structure which feeds into

school improvement planning. Information is not yet being utilised effectively to sharpen teaching and learning and raise expectations of what all pupils should achieve. Timescales for monitoring the progress made in key issues and the impact this is having on learners are not clear. However, senior and middle managers are aware of these shortcomings. They now have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and are eager to move the school forward.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	3
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?	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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 Devonshire Road Primary School, BL1 4ND

Do you remember when I visited your school recently with Mr Cohen and Mrs Cathie? We came to see how well you were doing. Thank you for making us feel welcome. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about the things you do and what you think about your school. Devonshire Road Primary is providing you with a satisfactory education and we can see that your teachers and assistants work very hard.

You have a super start in Reception class with so many interesting things to do each day. Thank you for showing me around each area. We were pleased to see that you behave well in your lessons most of the time. Most of you try hard and enjoy the activities teachers prepare. They know what you can do and want to help you do even better by setting targets that encourage you to do your very best. You have a lot of other activities to enjoy at your school, such as table tennis, football and netball. We thought the music we heard in school and your singing was great. I know it makes you happy and it certainly made us smile. Keep it up!

We know that at times a few children do not behave well and are unkind to others. It is important that all of you are happy and feel safe at school. So watch out for one another and make sure your teachers know when you feel unhappy. We have asked them to watch what is happening at playtimes more carefully. It is really important that everyone gets to school on time so that you don't miss the start of the day and you are able to do your best. We have asked your teachers to help you even more to make a punctual start to the day.

We have also asked your headteacher, teachers and governors to look very carefully at information that tells them what is good about your school and what could be improved so that they can do what is necessary to make it even better and help you to reach higher standards in your work.

Well done everyone. Keep up all your hard work and remember to make every effort to do your best for yourself and your school.