



Pike Fold Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105470
Local Authority Manchester
Inspection number 287232
Inspection dates 25–26 September 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	French Barn Lane
School category	Community		Blackley
Age range of pupils	3–11		Manchester M9 8ED
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7403656
Number on roll (school)	199	Fax number	0161 7950961
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Lundy
		Headteacher	Mrs M Denton
Date of previous school inspection	9 September 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	25–26 September 2006	287232

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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 serving a community of varied social and economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above average. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, though the school does have a growing number of pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pike Fold is a good school, and as its motto says, 'a place where stars sparkle'. Its successful commitment to inclusion has increased its reputation in the community as a caring and effective school where pupils make good progress. The school enjoys overwhelming support from the vast majority of its parents and carers and has successfully built links to involve them in school life. The headteacher provides good leadership and leads by example, as observed in her outstanding teaching of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in school assemblies. Pupils respond maturely to this, and as a result behave well and have a positive attitude towards their studies and each other. As one pupil commented, 'We are nice to each other here and don't leave anyone out, and this helps us learn.' Pupils flourish academically and socially. This is enhanced by good teaching that stimulates pupils to learn and helps them achieve well to reach average standards by the age of 11 from their low starting points as three year olds.

The school caters well for all its pupils, including those from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school's curriculum is good. Pupils are well guided in their learning. They have a good awareness of their learning targets and have a growing skill in judging the progress of their own learning. The school is developing a system to track pupils' progress throughout school but this does not yet provide a clear enough picture to show if pupils could do even better. There are inconsistencies in the teaching and learning in the Nursery. This arises because activities are not always planned with sufficient focus so that children get the most out of their learning in all aspects of the curriculum. In addition, curriculum links between the Reception class and Year 1 are insufficiently developed to ensure continuity in the children's learning. Staff display a high level of care for their pupils which helps to boost their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy participating in the many opportunities the school provides in sport and the performing arts.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Its self-evaluation of its performance is accurate. It provides good value for money. Morale in the school is very good and there is a strong commitment to teamwork from staff at all levels. The school also has a good track record of success in enabling pupils to achieve well. As a result, it demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that activities in the Nursery are better designed to meet children's learning needs so that they achieve well in all areas of learning.
- Improve curriculum links between the Reception class and the Year 1 class so that pupils build effectively on their previous learning.
- Check pupils' progress accurately as they move through school so all achieve as well as they can.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with standards that are well below those expected nationally for three year olds and make good progress during their time in school. Children make better progress in the Reception class than in the Nursery because the activities are better designed to develop pupils' skills. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are broadly average because of the good teaching they receive. The school sets realistic targets and the pupils invariably meet them. Pupils achieve impressive standards in singing and music, as demonstrated by the choir and wind orchestra performances.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. By the time they reach Year 6 they have grown into confident, mature, well mannered young people. Pupils enjoy coming to school and like taking part in all the activities offered to them. They speak with animation about their enjoyment of learning with comments such as, 'Lessons are great and teachers make them really fun and interesting by making links between subjects.' Behaviour in classes and around school is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop good social skills, as seen in their collaboration in lessons and play. Pupils reflect on global issues and used powerful words of their own to describe their thoughts on International Peace Day. For example, one pupil stated, 'We believe one day everyone can be friends.' Pupils have ample opportunity to develop their confidence in performing and speaking in front of an audience both in school and in the wider community. They are learning good skills to prepare them for the challenges of adult life.

Pupils show a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and participate eagerly in a variety of games during playtimes. 'We banned crisps at break times and encourage others to eat fruit instead,' commented the Healthy School Councillors. Pupils take on a wide range of meaningful, responsible roles that help them make an excellent contribution to the school community. Older pupils act as 'buddies' and show a great deal of tolerance in caring for the younger ones and teaching them traditional games at playtimes. Pupils voice their opinions through the school council and learn to take care of the environment through recycling a whole range of materials. Attendance has improved this year and is now broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 1 and 2 and helps pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned to build on pupils' previous learning. Teachers make it clear at the start of lessons what pupils are expected to learn and they make

good use of learning targets to ensure that pupils understand how they can improve their work. Good relationships help boost pupils' confidence to take an active part in lessons. This contributes to pupils' good pace of learning. In Year 1, pupils learn best through practical activities but occasionally they are expected to stay on the carpet too long listening to the teacher and, as a result, they struggle to maintain concentration and become restless. A new scheme for marking has recently been introduced and this is beginning to involve pupils well in assessing their own learning.

In the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory overall due to inconsistencies in the planning of activities. This sometimes lacks the sharp focus necessary to promote all six areas of learning effectively. In the Reception class there are some good examples where activities are planned well to stimulate children's interest and develop their independence. This is not always the case in the Nursery.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils find the school's thematic approach which links subjects in many lessons motivating and stimulating, and this contributes significantly to the good progress they make. The school is increasing the enrichment opportunities within its curriculum. The half-termly enrichment weeks add greatly to pupils' enjoyment, as do the wide range of visits and visitors that all pupils experience. The school makes good use of its information and communication technology to increase pupils' knowledge and skills. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development well and there is a strong emphasis on helping them to keep healthy and safe and look after their environment. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory but not planned well enough to balance the choice of indoor and outdoor activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good and make a marked contribution to the happy, welcoming feel about the school. Pupils are well supported in their learning; they know what they are expected to achieve and learning targets are set and regularly reviewed. Pupils' progress is generally tracked well at class level but the system does not give a clear overview of their progress as they move through the school. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils are in place. The school works well with other agencies to ensure that pupils get the help and support they need. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that staff will help them if they are troubled. As one pupil remarked, 'My teacher says her door is always open if anyone has a problem.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and have been key to improving achievement and standards. An effective programme of monitoring is in place involving management

at all levels. This is helping to drive up the quality of planning in most areas of the school and has increased the scope and impact of the variety of teaching strategies employed. School strategic planning involves wide consultation and is practical and flexible, with the Every Child Matters agenda at its heart to drive through a range of improvements. The roles of staff have been reviewed and changed in order to produce a management structure that accurately meets the needs of the school. The school has worked hard to ensure that it responds effectively to the changing nature and needs of its pupil intake since the last inspection. The recent appointments of an Inclusion Manager and a Foundation Stage coordinator are good examples of this. The governing body provides skilled and enthusiastic support and carries out its role as a 'critical friend' effectively.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 behaviour of learners	2
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	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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you for being so friendly and for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our time with you, especially talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things that are happening in your school.

What we liked most about your school:

- you like coming to school and you all get along very well. The 'buddies' are really good at organising games for everyone to join in
- your school council does a great deal for you and the school
- you particularly enjoy lessons where subjects are linked together
- your behaviour is good and you work hard
- the school keeps you safe and happy
- we know that you enjoy the extra-curricular sports and music activities. We were very impressed by the playing of your wind orchestra.

What we have asked the school to do now:

- we would like your teachers to think about improving the activities for the youngest children so they can learn more
- we have also asked your teachers to find ways of making sure that children find it easier to learn in lessons when they move up into Year 1 from the Reception class
- we would like your teachers to find even better ways of making sure that you are always doing as well as possible as you go through school.

We appreciated talking to you and watching you learn. Well done. You should be proud of yourselves and your school. We wish you well for the future.