



Fiddlers Lane Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105917
Local Authority Salford
Inspection number 287364
Inspection dates 5–6 March 2007
Reporting inspector Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Fiddlers Lane
School category	Community		Irlam, Salford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Lancashire M44 6QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7752490
Number on roll (school)	211	Fax number	0161 7752490
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Martin Parkinson
		Headteacher	Mrs Julie Carson
Date of previous school inspection	26 February 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is average in size and serves an area which has considerable social disadvantage. Pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above the national average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A small proportion are from minority ethnic families, some of whom speak English as an additional language. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Arts Mark awards. Building work is currently in progress to provide a children's centre at the school. During the past three years, the school has suffered instability due to staffing disruptions at leadership level and within some Key stage 2 classes. The current headteacher became permanent headteacher in December 2006, after being in an acting position for a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Fiddlers Lane is a satisfactory, but vastly improving school. It provides satisfactory value for money. Major staffing disruptions have had a negative effect on pupils' standards and achievement and the quality of provision. Leadership and management are now satisfactory, but with some noteworthy strengths. The good work which the headteacher has accomplished during her relatively short time in post is seen in the improvements that are happening in many areas. Notably, in standards of behaviour which are now satisfactory and in pupils' attendance which is now broadly average. Rigorous monitoring and self-evaluation by senior leaders is at the heart of these improvements and underpins the school's sound view of its effectiveness. However, in order to move the school forward and raise standards further, subject leaders need to play a stronger part in school improvement by tracking pupils' achievement within their areas of responsibility. Despite the improvement priorities identified by the school, its view of its own performance, within its self-evaluation is rather optimistic. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As a result of the staffing instability, standards in 2006 were below average in English and mathematics and well below in science. However, the school's recently improved detailed data is now providing accurate information to target the pupils who have been underachieving; action to improve the current Year 6's progress in English, mathematics and science through booster classes is now paying off. During this year, for example, the progress of many pupils in writing has been accelerated, and the drive to maintain this continues. A focus, from last September, to improve performance in mathematics and science has also been successful, with a significant number of pupils having made up lost ground. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to achieve the targets the school has set for them. Standards and provision in the Foundation Stage are good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The range is wide and includes good and outstanding teaching. Variation in the way that teachers use assessment information to adapt work to meet pupils' different needs and guide them on how to improve is the main factor that prevents teaching and learning, and ultimately achievement, from being good. Despite the unsettled period of the last few years, Fiddlers Lane's reputation for providing an exciting, creative education has been maintained. This is why most pupils are enthusiastic about their work and enjoy school. The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but has a number of significant strengths, including good enrichment to support work in the arts, sport and humanities, and many opportunities for pupils to learn essential life skills. Pastoral guidance and support is a strong feature of the school's provision and does much to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem and promote their personal development. Pupils know how to keep their minds and bodies healthy, and of how to avoid and deal with dangerous situations. They are tolerant of people's differences and know how to recognise and cope with issues such as bullying and racism. The range of opportunities pupils have to make decisions about their school and to contribute to the local and wider community, prepares them adequately for the future. Procedures for academic guidance are in place. This aspect is developing, but practice is not consistent. Consequently, pupils are not as aware as they could be of how well they are doing and how they could

improve. The school has addressed the issues identified at the time of the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure greater consistency in teachers' use of assessment information to match work more accurately to pupils' needs and better inform them of how they can improve.
- Ensure that subject leaders contribute fully to the tracking of pupils achievement in order to enable them to play a stronger part in school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children begin school with skills which are below those expected for their age and well below in their speaking and listening skills. As a result of the good teaching they receive, they get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage, making good progress. Because of their low starting point, the majority do not reach nationally expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Satisfactory progress is maintained within Year 1 and 2 and standards at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average. As a result of the prolonged instability of staffing within Key stage 2, standards have fluctuated. Consequently in 2006, pupils in Year 6 and, in particular, the higher attaining pupils, did not do as well as expected in English, mathematics and science. The school promptly identified this and introduced strategies to bring about improvement. This included tracking pupils' progress and included the setting of challenging targets within each year group for all groups of pupils. Although these are at an early stage of development, progress made by pupils, and, in particular, those in the current Year 6 is now satisfactory and pupils are on track to achieve the targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are satisfactory. The vast majority enjoy school as seen by their improved attendance, which is now only just below the national average. Pupils say that they appreciate the good opportunities they have to learn from, and with, others in the school community and beyond. Behaviour is improved and is currently satisfactory because of the strenuous efforts of all staff to establish expectations of positive attitudes to learning by all pupils. The school has an award for being a healthy and active school. This underlines the school's commitment to making pupils aware of the need to be healthy and safe. The school is calm and harmonious and generally free from bullying and harassment. This, and related matters, are discussed in class and this leads to pupils saying they feel confident that any incidents are quickly and effectively dealt with. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and pride in their

community. Consequently, they willingly take responsibility for others through the work of the school council or becoming a playground friend.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage where staff have a firm understanding of the age group and take great care to find out what the children know and need to know as they enter and move through the Foundation Stage. Many lessons make effective use of creative opportunities to motivate pupils and help them make meaningful links between subjects. Lesson planning is rightly being improved to ensure a sharper focus on identifying what pupils should achieve. The main feature that separates good and better teaching from that which is satisfactory is how effectively teachers use assessment information to match work to pupils' needs. Where this is done well, the more able pupils are well challenged and those who find learning more difficult are given appropriate help. As a result, all succeed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The high profile given to the arts and a wide range of good enrichment activities, including visits and out-of-school clubs, adds much to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their personal development. Children in the Foundation Stage have many good opportunities to learn through play and exploration. Community links are strong and are developed well within projects and themed weeks focusing on drama, the arts and health education. These events lead to considerable enjoyment by pupils, building good team spirit and positive self-esteem, and to creative approaches to teaching by staff. Academic achievement is supported adequately by satisfactory provision for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Pastoral care and support, including strong links with parents, outside agencies and other schools are good. The role of the class teacher is highly valued and ensures that every pupil is treated as an individual and is fully included in all aspects of the work of the school. This is evidenced by the falling number of external exclusions. The school ascribes this to the provision of a skilled learning mentor who offers vulnerable pupils valuable support that is relevant to their needs. Pupils say that they feel safe and can talk to their teachers if they are worried. Academic guidance is satisfactory because marked work does not always let pupils know what they should do to improve their work. Child protection and health and safety procedures are securely in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, with vision and drive, has been pivotal in restoring staff stability, increasing staff morale and the confidence of the parents in the school. She is committed to maintaining the lively, exciting and creative ethos within the school, and is relentless in her drive to improve standards and ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. The structure for providing leadership and management at different levels is in place and, in some instances, is working effectively. However, subject leaders need to play a stronger part in school improvement so that standards in all subjects are raised and that every pupil makes the best possible progress. Governors are supportive of the school, such as in the planning of the children's centre. They ask appropriate questions about practice but rely a little too much on the headteacher to challenge the school.

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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?	3
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	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	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	3
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.

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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were very helpful and polite and we really enjoyed talking to you. We especially welcomed talking to the members of the school council and to the playground friends. We agree with you that you have lots of great opportunities to visit interesting places, work with artists and musicians, and learn about people's different beliefs and customs. Your school works hard planning all these interesting activities and we know that you appreciate them. We think that your behaviour is improving well and that most of you try hard in lessons. We could see that you learnt best when you were given work that challenged you and really made you think, so we have asked your school to ensure that all teachers do this. Many of you told us that you wanted to reach higher levels in your work but not all of you were sure how to do this. To ensure that you understand how to improve, we have asked your teachers to make sure that you know your targets. You can help by remembering them and trying hard at all times to achieve them. Finally, we want to remind you of how lucky you are to have a headteacher and staff who are trying very hard to give you the best education they can to help you get on in life.