



Aspull Church Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106518
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287534
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector John Heap

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Bolton Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Aspull, Wigan
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire WN2 1QW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 746679
Number on roll (school)	202	Fax number	01942 833931
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr P Seddon
		Headteacher	Mrs Carol Aspinall
Date of previous school inspection	25 February 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 287534
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average sized primary school that has a mainly White British population. It serves a residential area with some signs of deprivation and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has Healthy School status, Investors in People, Worklife Balance and the Wigan Quality Standard in Early Years education.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm the school's view that it is good with outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents and pupils are rightly proud of the school and a typical view expressed is, 'We have been extremely pleased with the school and our children love it'. A major strength of the school is pupils' outstanding personal development and this is the result of the highly caring ethos and the way that the good curriculum supports development. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school because behaviour is exemplary and relationships between pupils and with adults are excellent. A very strong Christian ethos is evident and this promotes the supportive and challenging climate evident in the school. Pupils know they are safe and secure and, consequently, treat each other with sensitivity and care. All pupils are successfully encouraged to contribute to the school community and their voice is heard through the school council. Furthermore, some older pupils are responsible for the distribution of milk and fruit and these activities contribute significantly to pupils' exemplary understanding and adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Children join the school with standards that are broadly typical for four-year-olds. They get an effective start in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and make good progress. This is due to the good quality of teaching, the strong provision and the nurturing learning environment. By the time they enter Year 1 children have successfully reached the standards expected of them nationally. Pupils progress well through Years 1 and 2, but standards in writing at the end of Year 2 are not as high as those in reading and mathematics. This is because the marking of writing does not result in sufficiently high expectations of what pupils, especially higher attainers, should achieve. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. This has been consistent since 2003, although the rate of progress was lower in 2005. Pupils' achievement and progress are good because of the good and, sometimes, excellent teaching. Given their outstanding personal development and good achievement, pupils are splendidly prepared for their future education and life.

None of this would be possible without the good leadership and management provided by the teams of highly committed professionals and governors. The headteacher is highly regarded by the whole school community for her very strong leadership. She gets good support from effective key staff, who join with her in the continuous search for higher standards and improved provision. Long standing and successful monitoring procedures have provided the school with an accurate view of its qualities and areas for development. Governance is good. Governors are well informed about the school and make a significant contribution to many parts of its work. All partners have worked successfully together to enable the school to progress well and show that it has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use marking to set sufficiently high expectations for pupils, especially higher attainers, in order to raise standards in writing by the end of Year 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils and standards by Year 6 are above average. Results in the national tests in 2006 were much better than the previous year's. Of particular note are the high proportions of pupils reaching the higher than average Level 5, close to double the national figure in English and more than double in mathematics and science. This was a result of the school's very strong response to the dip in results in 2005. It also emphasised a return to the high levels of progress highlighted in government statistics for 2003 and 2004.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress and they enter Year 1 with attainments that reach the goals set nationally for them in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, particularly in reading and mathematics. Writing skills are more variable and the standards reached by higher attaining pupils are not as high as they could be. Marking is not used skilfully enough to ensure all pupils are fully challenged. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 progress very well and standards are above average. Where teaching in English is particularly effective, as in Year 5, pupils of all abilities are fully challenged. Higher attaining pupils have a very mature vocabulary and use it to splendid effect when speaking and writing. Girls tend to do better than boys, particularly in English. The school is addressing this by planning lessons and acquiring resources that will interest the boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the gifted and talented are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils respond positively to the school's distinctive Christian ethos; they displayed a deep sense of spirituality during an Agape Service (sharing of bread and grapes). Pupils' good attendance is a clear indication of their very positive attitudes to school and enjoyment of learning. Pupils are very attentive and their keenness is underlined by comments such as, 'We do maths on the computer - it's great and you don't even realise you're working!' Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils have a very good understanding of what it means to adopt a healthy lifestyle and many know how important it is to eat at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. Pupils' contributions to school, the local community and the wider world are exemplary. Practical demonstrations of this are the work of the school council, pupils taking bunches of flowers to a local sheltered accommodation for the elderly and raising money for the needy. The good academic standards and very strong attitudes show that pupils are very well prepared for the world of work. This is enhanced further by pupils taking part in 'mini enterprises' that help them recognise the value of money.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching promotes good progress, above average standards, very good attitudes to learning and exemplary relationships. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well which results in a positive climate for learning. Work is clearly matched to the needs of all pupils, which results in good progress. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to engage and motivate pupils. In Year 5, the teaching skilfully draws all pupils into discussions about writing by asking questions that engage pupils with a wide range of abilities. This type of high quality interaction is one of the main reasons why standards in writing improve so much by the end of Year 6, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. Effective use is made of 'talking partners' to encourage the sharing of ideas.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum contributes very well to the exemplary behaviour and personal development displayed by the pupils. A very strong component of this is the SEAL (Social, Emotional Aspects of Learning) project which teaches tolerance, respect and acceptance. Academic provision is good. Multicultural themed weeks help to prepare pupils for life in a diverse society. Strong links have been forged in France and pupils enjoyed a visit from the 'Ambassadors of Angers'. Good enrichment of the curriculum includes a wide range of visitors and visits; for example, the very good use of nearby Haigh Hall to support learning in the key skills of history, geography, art and physical education. The needs of gifted and talented pupils are met through a range of enrichment activities. The information and communication technology curriculum is very strong with teachers and pupils using a wide range of equipment and activities, including digi-cams, 'talking tin lids' and video conferencing. Parents find the regular information evenings about the curriculum are very helpful and enable them to support their child's learning.

In some classes, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use and develop their writing skills across the full range of subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. This is a very caring school and staff know the pupils very well. As one parent clearly stated, 'The teachers know each child and their individual needs are met'. Excellent relationships foster both personal and academic development. The school has very good procedures to help pupils entering or leaving the school. Child protection and other safeguarding procedures are robust and monitored very effectively. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they know who to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying

are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear individual education plans and are very well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants. Academic guidance is good overall. Pupils report that the way teachers mark their work helps them to identify what they need to do to improve further and this is extremely evident in Years 3 to 6. Marking is very largely purposeful, linked to lesson objectives, and helps pupils to identify what they need to do to improve further. However, it does not always help pupils achieve as well as they could in writing by the end of Year 2. This is particularly the case for higher attainers.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a very strong leader who admits to being very disappointed by the lower national tests results in 2005. Her response was quick and highly effective and results returned to the higher levels the school community has become accustomed to. Over time, strong action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning and in seeking a wide range of views from the school's partners. As a result, self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. The deputy headteacher provides effective support through the excellence of her English teaching and her consistent and strong approach to improving standards in English. This is particularly successful for the highest attaining older pupils. Leaders, managers and staff have a clear vision for the further development of the school and this is focused on providing all pupils with their full entitlement, both academically and personally. The school benefits from having an effective governing body that provides very strong support. Members have a good level of helpful expertise and interest and this enables governors to engage in effective monitoring of statutory and other responsibilities.

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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	2
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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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?	1

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

Mrs Ravey and I thoroughly enjoyed being in your school this week. We are very grateful for your warm welcome, courtesy and the help you provided. Please give a special thanks to the many children and adults who talked with us.

What we particularly liked about your school:

- the improvements in national test results that were made in 2006
- the good standards and progress in Reception and Years 1 to 6
- your exemplary behaviour, attitudes to school and the very strong relationships you develop
- the good and, sometimes, excellent teaching and learning
- the way you all work so hard to make your school such a caring place to live and work
- the excellent contribution that you make to the life of your school and the wider communities
- the good range of activities that make learning so exciting for you.
- the good leadership and management that your headteacher, deputy headteacher and other teachers give your school.

To make your school even better, we have asked your teachers to give younger pupils more guidance and advice to improve their writing and we are sure that they will follow that advice very closely.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.