



Audley Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119115
Local Authority Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 291323
Inspection dates 22–23 February 2007
Reporting inspector Jennie Platt

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

Type of school	Junior	School address	Queen's Park Road
School category	Community		Blackburn, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	7–11		BB1 1SE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 264294
Number on roll (school)	406	Fax number	01254 680048
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Hugh Bruce
		Headteacher	Mr Adrian Woods
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002		

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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 school in a socially and economically disadvantaged area. An above average proportion of pupils receive a free school meal. Most pupils come from the infant school which is on the same site. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and have English as an additional language and a few need help because they are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average. The school has a Sports and Arts in the Community (SPACE) building which includes a sports hall and an all-weather sports surface. These facilities are shared with the infant school and the community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education and has some good features. Pupils are happy and enjoy their lessons. Parents know staff have the well-being of their children at heart. One parent reported, 'Staff are always trying to do their best. They understand the Muslim culture and support the pupils' religion with things like Ramzan Club.' The school provides a haven of peace and calm for many pupils. All in the school are helped to feel welcome and relationships are very good. Effective care for the pupils means they know they are valued and they say they feel safe and secure. They appreciate the focus on healthy living and many take advantage of the excellent sporting facilities available. Pupils understand their responsibilities to the school and the wider community and fulfil these well. Their preparation for life ahead is satisfactory.

Pupils' overall achievement is satisfactory. From a low starting point an increasing number of pupils reach the level expected for their age. However, results of national tests are below average and some pupils, especially the more able ones, are capable of better progress and higher standards. The school's focus on speaking and listening is having a positive effect on extending pupils' confidence in expressing their ideas in a language which, for many, is not their first spoken language. Consequently, although standards remain low, there are clear signs of improvement in the pupils' progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Writing is the weakest aspect of English and many pupils lack the vocabulary to write imaginatively. The school uses assessment data well to identify underachievement and has improved the progress of Pakistani boys by providing additional group sessions to raise their aspirations.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and there are some good lessons, especially in the more practical aspects of numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), and in art and design. Good management of the pupils ensures lessons run smoothly. Most lessons are interesting although in some the pace is too slow and the work set for pupils is sometimes too easy; consequently, they do not always make the progress that they should. The curriculum is good and pupils especially appreciate the after-school clubs, with the team racers club at the top of the list.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership. He has successfully developed a strong sense of teamwork and raised the ethos of the school with amazing improvements to the accommodation. The school's self-evaluation is satisfactory and accurately identifies the main strengths and weaknesses in provision. However, not enough attention is given to pupils' overall achievement and the school's plans for improvement do not show clearly enough how standards are to be raised. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and most pupils are now making better progress. The school has a good capacity to improve because of a stronger management team and its determination to raise standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing throughout the school.

- Ensure the work set for the more able pupils is sufficiently challenging for them to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Make clearer in the schools plans for improvement how actions are to affect standards and how success can be measured.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Overall achievement is satisfactory. Starting from a low level of basic skills, especially in language and communication, pupils make satisfactory progress although standards remain below average. For the last four years, the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have been below the national average. The results show that pupils were underachieving in the past, especially the Pakistani pupils. The school itself identified underachievement among Pakistani boys who now receive effective help in small groups and the school's own assessments show that they are making better progress. Currently, there is no difference in the progress of boys and girls and they are equally represented in the higher literacy and numeracy groups. However, in 2006 the girls did not do as well as the boys in the national tests. A steady improvement in progress can now be seen, especially in science and mathematics. Progress is satisfactory in reading but writing is a weakness and pupils are not making enough progress in this aspect of English. Few of the more able pupils exceed the level expected for their age in English, mathematics or science, and the school has correctly made raising standards reached by these pupils a priority. The school did not fully meet its targets in 2006. These targets are realistic in bringing the school closer to what is expected for pupils in Year 6 but the expectations for pupils to exceed that standard are not yet high enough.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Those with statements of special educational need are making good progress because individual support and additional resources are closely targeted to help them meet their particular need. A few pupils arrive at school with very little spoken English and make good progress in learning the language because of the availability and support from experienced bilingual staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and relationships are very good. Beautiful displays of art show how spirituality is promoted across the curriculum. Behaviour is good and pupils show positive attitudes in lessons. The school meets its targets for attendance, which is improving because of concerted efforts to remind parents of the effect of absence on their children's learning. Consequently, casual absences have fallen and the school is making positive inroads in the extended absences to the Indian subcontinent. Pupils feel safe and know how to keep healthy. Many participate in the wide range of sporting activities. Pupils have a voice which they

express through the school council and their decisions have an impact on school life, for example, the purchase of playground equipment. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community by carrying out tasks around the school, including support for many charities. Many older pupils show a mature attitude to their learning and this, together with a satisfactory range of basic skills, gives a sound basis for their next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In some classes teaching is good and pupils make good progress because activities are more practical and this makes learning easier, especially for the pupils with English as an additional language. The calmness around the school and pupils' eagerness to learn owe a lot to teachers' good management of the pupils. Lessons are organised well and run smoothly. Classrooms are lively and stimulating and pupils enjoy their learning. Although teaching is satisfactory, it could still be improved. The matching of work to ability is inconsistent, especially for the more able pupils, and some lessons lack sufficient pace to sustain pupils' interest. Teachers do not always make clear what pupils are to learn and this leads to their completing tasks without understanding the purpose of the activities. This especially affects progress in writing. Although pupils learn grammar and punctuation skills effectively, not enough attention is given to developing the use of these skills and extending imaginative vocabulary in the pupils' free writing. Teachers diligently mark pupils' work and make clear how work can be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum. The school has rightly put great emphasis on the development of pupils' speaking and literacy skills to tackle the legacy of underachievement in the past. More time is given to reading and the opportunity in lessons to talk to a partner is raising pupils' confidence. The basic curriculum is adapted to match the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and those new to speaking English, but not enough attention is at present given to those identified as gifted and talented. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities and the school organises the school day to finish early enough for pupils to take part in these as well as meet their commitments at the mosque. Special events, visits and visitors, all serve to increase pupils' enjoyment of learning as well as adding to the school's commitment to encourage healthy and safe lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils and parents are right to praise this aspect of the school's work. Pupils' well-being is central to the work of the school. All staff develop very good relationships with pupils and respond very well to their individual pastoral needs. As a result, this is a happy environment where all pupils feel valued and safe. Good partnerships with external agencies and a well-established personal and social curriculum provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of healthy living and issues surrounding health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding children are good and high priority is given to protecting them from risk of harm whilst in school or on visits.

Good systems for tracking pupils' progress enable the school to identify and take action when pupils are identified as underachieving. This is evident in the improved progress of Pakistani boys. However, the impact of these systems on the results of national tests and the achievement of higher attaining pupils is not being seen yet because some teachers do not make best use of this information when planning lessons or deciding school priorities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership and his vision for the school is shared by all staff. As a result, the school has halted the downward trend in standards and there is now steady improvement in pupils' progress. The school's many strengths, such as the pupils' personal development and strong links with external agencies, are appreciated by pupils, parents and the wider community.

A devolved management system means staff are more accountable for the outcomes in their areas of management. They work closely together as a team and care is taken to ensure that pupils have the same opportunities to learn. The school's self-evaluation is guided and monitored by officers of the local authority and account is taken of the results of discussions with staff and parents. It is generally satisfactory and correctly identifies strengths and weaknesses. However, the link between the evaluation and the action needed to raise standards is not clear enough in the school's improvement plan. Not enough attention is given to the overall achievement of pupils when deciding key priorities and checking that plans sufficiently target improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are highly supportive of the school and rightly proud of its role in the community. A few are regular visitors but as yet they are not sufficiently knowledgeable to be involved at an early stage in making decisions about the school's development.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	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?	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	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?	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?	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

Audley Junior School

Queen's Park Road

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB1 1SE

23 February 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It is very clear to us that you enjoy school and you could not tell us of anything you would improve. You told us how much you appreciated the extra clubs and you are very fortunate to have the chance to make and race a model car. How exciting that must be! Your parents are correct that yours is a happy school and you play a big part in this by being friendly and kind to each other. We were pleased to hear that you know it is important to eat healthily and to keep fit. You certainly have some wonderful facilities for physical education. Your teachers take good care of you and you know how to keep safe.

We know the staff and governors are very keen to keep the school improving. You can help with this by coming to school regularly and always doing your best. We think some of you can reach higher standards and many of you could improve your writing especially by writing neatly and trying to think of fantastic words to show what you mean.

We wish you all every happiness in the future and are sure you will all have many wonderful memories of your time at Audley Junior School.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt, Mrs J Straw and Mr J Shields (Inspectors)