



Longshaw Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119125
Local Authority Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number 291329
Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Yates

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Crosby Road
School category	Community		Blackburn, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–7		BB2 3NF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 260534
Number on roll (school)	187	Fax number	01254 678351
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Cllr Florence Oldfield
		Headteacher	Mrs Ann Brants
Date of previous school inspection	1 April 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 27–28 February 2007	Inspection number 291329
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Longshaw Infant School is an average-sized school situated in an urban area of Blackburn. Most families live in housing association or council owned properties. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils are predominantly from White British families but there are a small number of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The school has an above average number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. It also has a small number of looked after children. When children start school, they have below average skills especially in relation to language and communication skills.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school benefiting from strong leadership by the headteacher and a clear focus on continuous improvement. As a result, nearly all major aspects of the school's work are good or better and lead to good achievement for children. Parents are rightly pleased with the quality of education their children receive. One parent's comment reflects the views of most parents, 'The school really cares about the individual progress and happiness of each child.' The school's overall evaluation is accurate and clearly demonstrates how well, in a relatively short period of time, the headteacher has accurately identified the school's strength and areas for development.

The school's major strength is the way it promotes the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. Because of this, pupils behave well, develop positive attitudes to learning and show real enjoyment of their school life. The pupils benefit from high quality care and guidance to support their learning and well-being. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support as do those pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Pupils make good progress because teaching is good and the work they are asked to do is made interesting and relevant to their needs.

Pupils start school with below average skills. Good progress in the Foundation Stage ensures that most children achieve close to nationally expected levels of skills and knowledge by the time they enter Year 1. By the time they leave at the end of Year 2, teacher assessments show that standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, standards in writing at the higher level are lower than those found in reading and mathematics.

The curriculum is good and there are major strengths in the way staff enrich learning through an outstanding variety of extra-curricular activities. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to use their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. The strong emphasis on pupils' personal development ensures that they develop very well their understanding of how to keep fit, healthy and safe. For example, pupils know that they need to be careful when crossing the road and that they should not talk to strangers. The Eco club (environmental awareness) provides good opportunities for pupils to enhance their learning; for example, they learn about the benefits of recycling.

The headteacher leads and manages the school well. She has a clear view of how the school can improve further. A well written school improvement plan is a valuable tool for school improvement. She has taken steps to improve the role of subject leaders who lead their subjects effectively. The school has good assessment systems in place but the information gathered about what pupils know, understand and can do is not used consistently well across the school. Good on-going improvements are being made to the school building and to the school's resources. This programme of refurbishment reflects the school's desire to provide the best possible environment for learning to take place. Governance is satisfactory, but because many governors are relatively new,

their role in the strategic leadership of the school is at an early stage of development. The school provides good value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standard of pupils' writing, especially for more able pupils, by providing more opportunities for them to write in all areas of the curriculum.
- Ensure that assessment information is used effectively so that work is always matched accurately to pupils' varying needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's standards are average and their achievement is good. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress as do looked after pupils. On entry to school, attainment is below that expected nationally. Children make good progress in the areas of learning but all children do not reach the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage. The progress that children make is better than last year because effective use is made of assessment information in matching work to children's needs and there is less staff disruption.

Good progress continues in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. Although standards in writing are average, not enough children reach the higher level (Level 3) because opportunities are missed for raising them further; for example, children have too few chances to develop their writing skills in other subjects. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Those pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well being are outstanding. Pupils enjoy lessons and really appreciate trips and visitors to the school. By Year 2, children are very confident and have a very good level of self-esteem, which demonstrates outstanding progress from the time they start school. Children behave very well in lessons and around the school and there is a really happy atmosphere in which children thrive. Looked after children are integrated fully into the school and they make good progress. This is because all members of staff ensure that these children's needs are met very effectively. Children readily accept responsibility and are not frightened about offering ideas for improving 'their school' through the school's council. They are proud of the new furniture and of the outside Zone Parc, which followed ideas put forward by pupils. Children demonstrate very good attitudes to learning; they love school and attend regularly. A very good emphasis on learning basic skills results in pupils applying their basic skills swiftly and accurately. Thus, they are prepared well for the next stage in their education. Pupils respond outstandingly well to the school's provision for their

spiritual, moral and social development. Work to promote environmental awareness, which involves families in a recycling project, has enhanced children's understanding of life in the community. Children know what is right and wrong, accept responsibility and care sensitively for each other's safety and well-being. Their spiritual development is not neglected; for example, they experience the wonders of nature such as the early arrival of frog spawn in the school's secure garden area. Pupils' good cultural development is enhanced through celebrating the cultures of people from their own and from other than Western traditions. For example, alongside celebrating 'Pancake Day' (Shrove Tuesday) children also celebrate the Chinese New Year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers know their pupils well. The quality of the teaching and learning is underpinned by high quality relationships not only with teachers but also with classroom assistants. As a result, all pupils including those from culturally diverse backgrounds succeed well. Teaching typically includes well planned activities and good use of questioning. In Year 2, pupils thrive on being asked to solve mentally challenging numerical problems. However, teachers in Years 1 and 2 do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in subjects across the curriculum. Very good use is made of a visiting music specialist to ensure that pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills.

In the Foundation Stage, staff strike a good balance between freedom of choice with certain tasks and directing children carefully in others. Throughout the school, good use is made of teaching assistants to support learning, especially for those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The staff ensure that looked after pupils are quickly integrated into the school and that their learning and personal needs are very well met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The very well structured programme of personal and social education helps pupils to stay safe and healthy and prepares them well for the future. The range of extra-curricular activities is outstanding and is much wider than that usually found in infant schools. Clubs support learning through collaborative play, conversation skills, sport, art and music. All activities are well attended and make a good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school and their understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. Through initiatives such as theme weeks, staff have worked together successfully to link subjects around a shared topic. Basic skills provision is very strong in Years 1 and 2 but opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects. The review of the Foundation Stage curriculum has been successful and has resulted in increased opportunities for children to experience all areas of learning based on a

firm understanding of what their individual needs are. Those pupils needing additional help to boost their learning have equal access to the curriculum and good support. As a result, they make great strides in their learning and personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all of its pupils. All members of staff know the pupils very well; parents say how much they appreciate their support and care. Staff help families and individuals to overcome difficulties when they arise and pupils say they feel safe and secure at school. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, those who learn English as an additional language and looked after children in the care of foster parents have very well managed support. Pupils benefit from very good support and guidance for their personal development; there are rigorous procedures for protecting and safeguarding pupils. This helps them develop self-esteem, confidence and to achieve well. Newly established assessment procedures are in place to track pupils' academic progress across the school but the information gathered is not used consistently well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good strong and determined leadership and management that not only have a focus on improving academic standards but also on ensuring that every child really does matter. She is successful on both counts. Pupils feel valued, make good progress and are included in everything the school offers. The role of curriculum leaders has improved and they are now more proactive in leading their subjects. The school has good systems in place to monitor and evaluate progress and the school improvement plan is a useful tool for school improvement. Parents and pupils are consulted on a regular basis and their views taken into account. Governance is satisfactory. The governors know what is going on in school but with the majority of governors being new, they do not yet act as a critical friend to the school. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed successfully. The school's self-evaluation has resulted in a good overview of the work of the school, which was confirmed by the inspection to be accurate.

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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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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	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

Longshaw Infant School

Crosby Road

Blackburn

Lancashire

BB2 3NF

1 March 2007

Dear Children

I want to thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I think your school is a good one. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing your work and also enjoyed talking to your headteacher and teachers.

What I liked most about your school.

- You are well looked after and enjoy going to school.
- You are taught the right things, make good progress and are learning as well as you should be.
- You behave very well, and get on well with each other.
- You have a good headteacher; she is doing the right things to make your school even better with help from your teachers and classroom helpers.
- Your parents are very happy with the school.

What I have asked your school to do to make it even better.

- To provide you with more opportunities use your writing skills in subjects such as religious education, history and science.
- To make sure your teachers make full use of the information they collect about the progress you are making to help make your work better still.

I hope you carry on doing as well as you can at school. My best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates

Lead inspector