



Lancaster Ridge Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119131
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291332
Inspection dates 9–10 January 2007
Reporting inspector Gordon Alston

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Keswick Road
School category	Community		Lancaster, Lancashire
Age range of pupils	4–11		LA1 3LE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01524 67880
Number on roll (school)	154	Fax number	01524 849927
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rev Philip Hudd
		Headteacher	Mrs Susan Fitt
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is in an area with a high level of social disadvantage, which is reflected in the well above average number of pupils eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. Attainment on entry to the school varies but is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very small proportion is from a range of minority ethnic groups. The school has recently been awarded an Activemark award. Attached to the school are a newly opened Children's Centre and a Special Educational Resource Facility (SERF) for pupils with speech, language and communications difficulties. These pupils are integrated into the mainstream school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation that the school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It sets high store in creating a supportive climate for its community in order to help pupils learn more effectively. The headteacher leaves no stone unturned to provide the best in meeting pupils' personal needs. As a result, the school has developed close, effective ties with a wide range of different agencies to support the pupils in raising self-esteem, developing self-control and gaining basic skills. Pupils and parents benefit from discussions with mentors, strong links with the adjoining Children's Centre and chances to participate in before- and after-school provision. A measure of the success of this good pastoral work is the improvement in parents' support for the school and in pupils' behaviour. It is also highly evident in the way the pupils eat healthily, take exercise and actively seek help from buddies and other adults. The pupils say they feel safe, secure and very happy in school. That said, although given the same endeavour, the school's academic provision is not yet as strong; improvements have been hampered by management issues and pockets of ineffective teaching. Both issues are in the process of being successfully resolved.

Pupils start school with below average standards, particularly weak in language skills, and they leave Year 6 with below average standards. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, providing a positive start. Over time, pupils make satisfactory progress and they achieve satisfactorily by the time they leave the school. In recent national tests, results have been below average; weaker in writing and for more able pupils. The school identified these weaknesses and put a number of initiatives in place; pupils' work and current data provide a convincing picture of improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, helped by effective support from classroom assistants.

Teaching is satisfactory. It is stronger in Year 6, where lessons have more consistent pace and challenge. When pupils are set challenging tasks and are expected to think for themselves, they learn more quickly and make good progress. However, this does not happen often enough throughout the school, which results in pupils making variable progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. This is most evident when work set for pupils is not matched accurately to their varying needs, especially those of the more able pupils. The curriculum is good and is enriched by visitors and visits to a range of interesting places, which make learning real and active. Pupils say they like to learn this way.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has built a positive team spirit amongst the staff, appointed new staff and supported leaders whose management skills are developing well. The school satisfactorily evaluates its performance. Managers are beginning to make full use of this to help raise standards and improve achievement. However, senior managers and subject leaders' skills in monitoring and evaluating new initiatives are underdeveloped. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has a sound capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise pupils' standards and achievement, particularly in writing.
- Ensure work is matched accurately to pupils' varying needs, especially for the more able pupils.
- Extend good practice in evaluating school performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

When pupils enter school, their standards are below average and the range of ability is wide. Pupils' skills are weaker in English, particularly in their ability to explain ideas because of a limited vocabulary, than in mathematics. By the end of Reception, children make good progress but standards are below those expected nationally for children of this age. By the end of Year 2, standards remain below average but pupils make satisfactory progress. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because they receive good support for their learning.

The results for Year 6 pupils in 2005 national tests were below average overall and lower in English than mathematics. Results show that although standards rose generally, standards fell in writing, particularly at the higher levels. Unvalidated data for 2006 shows a similar picture. The school is aware of this and has put a number of initiatives in place, for example, better assessment of writing and regular role-play sessions to help increase the pupils' vocabulary. Work in pupils' books and current data provide a convincing picture of improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are well behaved; they are welcoming to visitors and like being in school. They enjoy learning, developing new skills and taking part in all that the school provides. The school council is making a positive contribution to the school's work, for example, in enhancing playground equipment. There is very little bullying or harassment but, when incidents do occur, pupils say they are dealt with swiftly. The school works hard to improve attendance, which is now average.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong and relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, such as through their support of various charities, and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded, such as through the use of special certificates and assemblies. Pupils develop satisfactory skills to equip them for the next stage of their education and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good; in other classes, they are satisfactory with good features. Typical features include good relationships between teachers and pupils that encourage pupils to try hard and successfully complete a task. Effective classroom management leads to good concentration and few disruptions for learners. Classroom assistants provide good support. Recent initiatives such as role-play and better assessment have improved the teaching of writing.

The best lessons are exciting; in a Year 6 science lesson the teacher made tasks interesting by allowing pupils to use their initiative. Good use was made of the electronic whiteboard, which sustained pupils' interest. Pupils' learning is most effective when they are actively involved from the start of the lesson. Procedures are in place for assessing pupils' work but best use is not always made of this information. As a result, tasks are sometimes too easy or too hard, especially for more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a good, diverse and creative curriculum, which provides for all needs. Pupils steadily develop knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Important skills, such as practising writing skills in other subjects, are promoted well to help pupils improve their basic skills. Personal and social development is given strong emphasis and lies at the heart of the school's work. Pupils enjoy and benefit from a good range of clubs, such as in sport, drama and music. As well as adding to their enjoyment of learning, these experiences help to develop healthy and varied lifestyles. The good work of the learning mentors enables all pupils to access the curriculum successfully.

Excursions to interesting places and visits from authors and artists help to bring learning to life. Themed events help stimulate pupils' interest, break down barriers between subjects and promote learning. As a result, pupils' horizons are broadened considerably as they move through the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of all its pupils, which helps explain why pupils find the school 'a happy place'. Health and safety systems meet requirements. Risk assessments are carefully and conscientiously conducted. There are effective arrangements for child protection. Staff do all they can to ensure that there is a smooth transition when pupils join or leave the school. Links with outside agencies, such as the Children's Centre, are strongly embedded across the school's work. The school provides good information for parents, who value what the school does for their children. Group

targets are set in English and mathematics but have yet to impact fully on learning. This is because pupils do not always know their targets or understand what they have to do in order to achieve them

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked very hard to create a school that provides good support for parents and pupils and a place where pupils feel safe, happy and valued. Another crucial success has been the building of a positive team spirit amongst the staff, whose skills as leaders are developing and improving. Weaknesses have been identified and formal structures and processes for improving the quality of teaching and learning are becoming effective. Similarly, monitoring key aspects of the school's work has been carried out and weaknesses have been correctly identified with necessary follow-up actions being taken. For example, recent improvements to the system that tracks the progress pupils make are well founded and give reliable information.

Although the school has developed its capability to analyse and evaluate its performance, the monitoring and evaluating of new initiatives by senior managers and subject leaders requires a sharper focus. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has a sound capacity to improve. The governing body is supportive of the school and holds it to account for its performance. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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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 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	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	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	2
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

Lancaster Ridge Primary School

Keswick Road

Lancaster

Lancashire

LA1 3LE

9 Jan 2007

Dear Pupils

I am writing this letter after thinking about the two enjoyable days we spent in your school. We came to see how good your school is, and you had just as important a role in this as your teachers had. You did not let the school down in any way. Your friendliness, good behaviour and the way you get on with one another are a credit to you all. These qualities helped us to judge just how good your school is in helping you to grow and learn.

So, what did we think after these two days? I always ask pupils their views of the school and one girl replied, 'Everyone is happy here and teachers really care'. She was right; your school is a happy, caring school. You have a good team of adults led by a hard-working headteacher where everyone wants you to do as well as you can and be happy, safe and healthy. Your teachers try to make learning interesting and arrange lots of visits for you to go on and visitors to talk to you. I was pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well everyone gets on. I saw lots of pupils who have responsibilities and jobs to do, and who do them well.

Everyone wants your school to become a good school and we have recommended your school to concentrate on specific things. We think you could be reaching higher standards in English, particularly writing, by the time you leave the school. In order to achieve this, I have asked your teachers to really push you hard with your work, especially more able pupils, to try and increase the progress you make in all their lessons. You can help by working as hard as you can.

I wish you well and good luck for the future.

Gordon Alston

Lead inspector