

Ramsbottom Stubbins Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119196
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291353
Inspection date	10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	195
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Philip Dunne
Headteacher	Miss Patricia Braddock
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002
School address	Bolton Road North Stubbins Ramsbottom Bury Lancashire BLO ONA
Telephone number	01706 822063
Fax number	01706 829030

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving a reasonably affluent area in the Pennine foothills. Children's attainment at entry is usually above average, but has been broadly average for the last two years. Almost all the pupils are White British, with a very small number of pupils from a range of minority ethnic groups. All the pupils speak English. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Stubbins has improved from being very good at its last inspection to being an outstanding primary school now. Pupils say that they love being here, and almost all parents confirm this. One parent spoke for many in writing, 'Stubbins is a wonderful school in a beautiful setting.'

The school is a vibrant place where, from the very beginning of the school day, pupils are involved in a broad range of rich learning experiences which provide not only for academic excellence but also for the many and varied interests of pupils. Whether it is through involvement in the school orchestra or in singing songs in French or Spanish, the focus of all that the school does is upon ensuring that pupils do their best and have the best. This is what makes the school outstanding. Every opportunity is provided to make learning fun but with the aim of pupils developing as interested and motivated learners who are able to pursue their own talents and interests whilst also achieving high standards.

Standards are very high by the end of Year 6, and pupils' achievement is amongst the best in the country. Standards are usually significantly above average by the end of Year 2, but fell last year because fewer pupils reached higher than the nationally expected levels. Children reach above the levels expected nationally by the end of Reception. Progress currently for almost all children is at least good in Reception, as it is for most pupils in Years 1 and 2. Progress accelerates strongly in Years 3 to 6, particularly for older pupils, who thrive on the challenging work set for them.

Pupils' personal development is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children in Year 6 are very confident, competent young people, polite and thoughtful, and have high expectations of themselves. They are very well prepared to move on to high school. Throughout the school, pupils put into practice the school's healthy living messages, for instance those delivered tastily through award-winning school meals. Pupils are very well cared for and safe in school, and respond by behaving extremely well and having excellent attitudes to learning. Year 6 said, 'We love learning new things, and always welcome new people to our school.' They make an excellent contribution to the school and local community.

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers and support staff plan work very well to meet all the different groups of pupils' needs. The good curriculum covers all requirements including for Reception children. However, opportunities are missed in history and geography, for example, to base pupils' learning on the rich heritage of the locality and to link learning more coherently between subjects. Partnerships with parents, the local authority, other local schools and sports clubs add real value to the school's work.

Leadership and management are excellent, leading to high level outcomes for the pupils. Monitoring and self-evaluation are rigorous, if a little modest, and identify areas for improvement accurately. The headteacher has high expectations and aspirations for the pupils and the staff. The new senior leadership team operates very successfully to involve all staff in self-evaluation and improvement. Governance has improved and is now excellent. The school gives excellent value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Use the local area more effectively in subjects such as history.

- Look for ways to link children's learning experiences more coherently between different subjects to raise standards in line with those reached in the core.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Standards are very high, and achievement is excellent overall. Children entered the Reception class at broadly average levels in the last two years, lower than has been typical for the school. They have made good progress, however, and generally reach above average levels in most of the areas of learning. Standards are generally well above average by the end of Year 2 but fell to just above average in 2006, especially in reading and writing. This was because fewer pupils than usual reached the higher levels. However, a review of the school's assessment process has taken place and staff are confident that standards in Year 2 this year will be above average in English, mathematics and science tests. Standards are very high by Year 6 and achievement is exceptional: the result of cumulative progress across the school. The few children of minority ethnic or mixed heritage achieve similar levels to their peers. The school has rightly identified that middle attaining girls were the lowest achievers last year, although still above average in national tests, and has put good measures in place to avoid a repetition.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is excellent, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the school, reflected in their excellent attendance. There are superb opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of beauty and self-awareness through art, music, dance and personal and social education. The school supports parents extremely well in ensuring that pupils' personal skills are of a very high standard, recognised whenever pupils go out on visits. They are friendly, articulate, confident and courteous. They adopt the school's emphasis on safety and healthy lifestyles extremely well. Their high standards in almost all aspects of learning prepare them very well for the next stage of their lives. From ensuring that their classrooms are tidy to looking after others very responsibly, the pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. For example, the school council heard that a local pre-school had been severely damaged in a storm so sought permission to organise a 'non-uniform day', raising almost £200 as a donation.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching is outstanding, leading to pupils becoming extremely skilled learners by Year 6. Teaching in lessons is at least good throughout the school, and is often excellent. The staff plan work accurately to meet pupils' needs, and ensure that pupils know how to improve their work through excellent marking and individual and class discussion. The support staff have an excellent impact on pupils' learning, reinforcing strongly the work of the teachers. From analysis of assessment data, the staff identified that middle attaining pupils sometimes make less progress than others do. Accordingly, they now plan very effectively for these pupils as a separate target group, and monitor their progress very closely. The vast majority of parents praise the staff for the pleasure and challenge in learning they provide for their children.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, and meets all requirements. It is strongest in the core subjects, but also has strengths in other subjects. However, there is not enough use made by staff of the richness of the immediate and wider locality in the North West. The newly developing improvement plan has a timely focus on provision for Reception children. There are major plans to improve the outdoor provision for these children, and to review the good provision and aim for excellence. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are prominent and covered well. There are also strengths in other areas, such as music, physical education, and information and communication technology. The curriculum is varied and well enriched by visits, visitors and special events, such as Arts Week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. All required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. Older pupils say that there is no bullying as everyone gets on well together. Gifted and talented pupils are recognised and, through the enriched curriculum, are given ample opportunities to extend their skills, such as in music and sport, and to achieve well. Assessment is used very effectively to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and offered specific support so that they make good progress towards targets set for them. The school has recognised an increasing number of pupils with specific social and emotional needs. Very good procedures have been implemented to help identify them early and then provide the support they need. This ensures that the needs of all pupils are well known and that their individual needs can be met effectively. The school takes great care to ensure that pupils are safe but also have very good opportunities to explore their interests and ideas.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher had only just taken up her post at the last inspection, when the impact of her leadership was already recognised. Five years on, the school has developed into a fine and highly inclusive place with an excellent ethos and atmosphere for learning. A parent summarised many other parents' views in writing, 'Stubbins is an extended family where my children are valued as individuals and encouraged to maximise their potential.' The headteacher's strong influence and high expectations have helped its pupils reach very high standards by Year 6. All staff, and especially those in leadership roles, support the headteacher very effectively by fulfilling their responsibilities very well. Governors hold the school to account, and many are closely involved in its daily life. The governors support the leadership team very well in selecting staff carefully to meet the school's aims. Their influence has improved since the last inspection. Given the progress made, and the school's current position, the capacity to maintain and build further on these high standards is excellent.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
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?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

11 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ramsbottom Stubbins Primary School, Lancashire, BLO 0NA

Thank you for your warm Stubbins' welcome when I visited your school. You will remember that I came to check how well your school helps you to learn and grow as young people.

As you already know, I agree with you and almost all your parents that you attend an excellent school that helps you to learn and grow extremely well. I very much enjoyed my day in your company, and think that you help the staff to help you by working hard, getting on well together, and behaving outstandingly. You told me that you have a wide range of lessons and activities, and you are right. The staff work hard and have high expectations of themselves and of you; that is part of the reason that the standards reached by the end of Year 6 are so high. When the changes have been made to the Reception area, won't that be an exciting place to be?

Your school provides you with a good learning environment and in turn, you try hard in music, sport, and computing as well as in English, mathematics and science. I have asked the staff, and ask you, to make more use of the richness of the school's locality, and to link learning ideas more across subjects so that you reach the same high levels in all areas of learning. You will, I am sure, continue to enjoy school and do the best you can, which is all that can be expected of you.

With best wishes for your futures, wherever they may take you.

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson

Lead Inspector