

Earby Springfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119251
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291364
Inspection dates	26–27 April 2007
Reporting inspector	Dave Byrne

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	
School	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Tomlinson
Headteacher	Mrs Dawn Liversidge
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002
School address	Bailey Street Earby Barnoldswick Lancashire BB18 6SJ
Telephone number	01282 843598
Fax number	01282 843585

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is broadly average in size. The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. The percentage eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are broadly average although a higher percentage than average have statements of special educational need. The attainment of most children starting school in Reception is below what is typical for their age. The headteacher has been in post for about two years and there have been significant changes of senior staffing during the two years. Out of school care is provided for children before and after school, and during holidays.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school, which is improving after a time when standards had dropped. The improvement is as a result of the strong and influential leadership by the relatively new headteacher. By enlisting the support of everyone in school and strengthening partnerships with parents and the community, the headteacher has created a strong sense of common purpose, and clarity of vision for raising pupils' achievement. Parents feel that the school is getting better all the time and value the efforts being made to welcome them and listen to their views. The vast majority rightly say that it is a caring school. Pupils' personal development and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good and underpin their good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school, stay safe and healthy and through events such as the Pendle music festival, get involved in the local community. They are satisfactorily prepared for their next stage of education.

Achievement is satisfactory but, as the school acknowledges, it could be better. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) make good progress. Standards vary from year to year according to the ability of pupils in the year group. In 2006, standards were below average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils are on course this year to attain average results in Year 2. In Year 6, a well above average number have LDD and standards this year are below average. Progress is currently increasing across the school and ensures that pupils are making up for some underachievement in the past, particularly in Key Stage 1. This is a result of improvements in teaching after a period of disruption, a better curriculum and sharper management. Pupils still make greater gains in mathematics, reading and science than in they do in speaking and writing. This is because, until recently, not enough attention has been given to improving pupils' vocabulary and speaking and writing skills. The school is now tackling these weaknesses and the progress that pupils make in developing their speaking and writing skills is improving and their progress is now satisfactory. Significant investments in information and communication technology (ICT) and associated staff training have raised standards, which are now in line with expectations.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved under the effective leadership of the headteacher. It is currently good overall with particular strengths in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Recent improvements to the curriculum are broadening opportunities for all pupils to speak and write and a good range of extra-curricular clubs have been established. Satisfactory governance ensures that the school meets statutory requirements. A new senior management team is developing well but is still relatively inexperienced in managing aspects of the school's strategic development. Despite this, the school evaluates itself accurately and pinpoints the right priorities for improvement. Some success is already evident, particularly in the improved standards in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, with better standards in ICT and the introduction of an effective assessment system. Given the current leadership of the headteacher and the strong team spirit amongst staff and governors, there is a good capacity to secure improvement in the future.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in all subjects but in particular the pupils' skills of speaking and writing.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning by ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to think for themselves and work independently.
- Strengthen the expertise of the senior management team in the strategic management of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory but progress is increasing. This is as a result of strong and decisive leadership by the headteacher, which has raised the expectations for staff and pupils and generated positive developments to the curriculum and more effective teaching. This has led to pupils making good progress in lessons which is eradicating previous underachievement by some groups of pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1. They now achieve at least satisfactorily.

Children start school with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their age. In Reception, progress has improved in the last two years as a result of better teaching. As a result, children make good progress and by the end of Reception, most children reach the standards expected for their age.

In Key Stage 1, achievement was unsatisfactory in 2005. Since then, better teaching has increased achievement. This year pupils in Year 2 are achieving well and this year standards are at least average.

In Key Stage 2, standards have generally been going up since 2003. In 2006 they were above average in mathematics and science and average in English. The current Year 6 includes a third of pupils have LDD; consequently results are predicted to be below average. Given the pupils' below average results when they were in Year 2, this indicates satisfactory achievement. Many pupils' start school with poor speaking skills and this reduces their performance in many subjects, in particular in writing. Strategies to improve speaking have been introduced and progress in speaking and writing is improving in lessons. Pupils with LDD achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Relationships in the school are good and pupils are normally polite, friendly and courteous. Their good behaviour and attitudes to work contribute to the happy and enjoyable atmosphere within school. Attendance is average and improving reflecting the pupils' view that their school is getting better. The school council involves pupils in making decisions, such as choosing new play equipment and persuading the local authority to provide traffic calming measures in the road outside school. Pupils are keen to take initiative in lessons, although many are currently not used to doing so. They understand the choices needed to be safe and healthy. The popularity of the healthy tuck-shop demonstrates their desire to eat healthily. The good personal development of pupils coupled with satisfactory academic achievement, provides them with a sound preparation for the next stage of their education and their economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall with particular strengths in the Foundation Stage and Years 5 and 6. Teaching has improved over the last two years under the strong guidance from the headteacher. The teaching seen during the inspection, was good with pupils making good progress in the majority of lessons. Teachers are working hard to provide pupils with lively and exciting lessons that frequently involve pupils in performing practical activities. High expectations are set for pupils to think for themselves, to develop their ideas and to use their initiative to solve problems and/or locate information using books and computers. Pupils are also being increasingly encouraged to think about how well they have achieved so that they can see how to improve. In a few lessons, however, there is a tendency for teachers not to give pupils enough time to work on their own and think for themselves, which reduces their participation in learning. A strength of teaching is the quality of support provided by teaching assistants. This makes a significant contribution to the good levels of inclusion for pupils with LDD. Assessment procedures are developing well and are increasingly being used effectively by teachers to plan work that meets pupils' varying needs. Many positive improvements to marking have been introduced by the senior staff but are still not fully implemented across the school. In some classes, marking involves pupils in establishing how to improve their work but in others it is still merely a tick or brief comment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum satisfactorily meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils although at times the needs of the very highest attainers are not fully met. The curriculum contributes well to the personal development of pupils with LDD. The curriculum is, however, less effective in helping pupils achieve as well as they can in their speaking and writing. Curriculum provision is being reviewed in order to boost achievement overall by improving pupils' creativity by linking subjects together. There has been a significant improvement recently in the range and quality of provision for extra curricular activities. Pupils now benefit from a good range of clubs and activities, including a residential educational visit for Year 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Good attention is given to the safety of the pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and health and safety are in place. Through events such as praise assemblies and class rewards, pupils' academic and personal success are rewarded. This boosts their self-confidence and encourages desirable behaviour and a good work ethic. The school provides good guidance about healthy eating and regular physical activity is encouraged. Pupils are generally given good academic guidance about what they have to do to improve further, but this is consistent across the school. Those with LDD benefit from good levels of personal support resulting from very effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. The school is starting to involve parents more in their children's education and new initiatives are imminent to develop such links.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. In the last five terms, the headteacher has made an excellent contribution and her energy, vision and determination have had a very positive effect on all areas of school life. She has brought the school safely through a time of considerable uncertainty resulting from unavoidable staff changes. Pupils' progress is increasing and achievement is rising. A strong team spirit exists amongst staff and there is a shared commitment to raise standards. The new senior management team has a good perspective of the school's strengths and weaknesses but as yet, has not gained enough experience in the strategic management of the school. The headteacher has strengthened the profile of professional development across the school. The school improvement plan reflects effective self-evaluation and identifies where training will benefit pupils; for example, in the better use of ICT and management training for senior staff. The governing body is very supportive of the school and ensures that all statutory requirements are met. The budget is used wisely and ensures that the school is suitably staffed, the accommodation is well maintained and there are no gaps in key resources.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	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	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?	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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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.

Annex A

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	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

27 April 2007

Inspection of Earby Springfield Primary School, Lancashire, BB18 6SJ

Dear Pupils,

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school. You were all really friendly and polite and keen to talk to me. I can see why you said that you enjoy coming to school and that it is getting better all the time. All the adults care about you and want you to do well. It is good to hear that if you have any problems or are upset about anything, there is always an adult or a classmate to help you.

There have had many changes in teachers in recent years. This has upset some of you, but I feel that things are now settling down. The standard of your work is rising because teachers are trying to give you more exciting lessons, often with lots of practical things to do. You can still do better though and I have asked the school to find ways of doing this. I think that in particular you can do better at speaking and writing.

Your headteacher is superb and listens very carefully to your views so that the school can continue to get better. I feel, though, that at the moment your headteacher is doing lots and lots. I have asked the school to spread the load by training some other staff to give her more help.

I was very pleased to find that almost all of your mums and dads like your school. It is good that many of them are keen to help you at home and willing to support you the school.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Dave Byrne (Lead inspector)