



# Balshaw Lane Community Primary School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 119312  
**Local Authority** Lancashire  
**Inspection number** 291382  
**Inspection dates** 7–8 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Penny Parrish

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bredon Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Euxton, Chorley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		Lancashire, PR7 6NS
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01257 278722
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	265	<b>Fax number</b>	01257 233129
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms Anne Stafford
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sharon Bowker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	7–8 February 2007	291382

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This primary school is larger than average, serving the community of Euxton, a suburb of the town of Chorley. The school is popular in the locality and there are few empty places; the number on roll is higher than at the time of the last inspection. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average (3.5%), as is the number of pupils (6.4%) with learning difficulties and disabilities. Most pupils are of White British background; a small number have a minority ethnic heritage, including two pupils in the early stages of learning English.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Balshaw Lane is a good school. A key factor in its success is the very good relationships between all in the school community. Pupils enjoy learning and their behaviour is outstanding. As one parent wrote, 'There's a wonderful atmosphere and no division of infants and juniors, everyone seems to get on very well.' Pupils feel safe because they are cared for well and know willing help is at hand when needed.

Children start school in the Reception class with attainments that are generally above what is usually found, particularly in speaking and listening and in personal and social development. The school builds well on these strengths and good personal and social skills are the foundation of the good teaching and learning evident in the school. Pupils are confident, encouraged well and make good contributions to lessons. By the end of Reception, the learning goals set nationally are exceeded by most children.

Achievement is good, overall. Standards are well above average by Year 2 and by Year 6 in literacy, numeracy and science, as reflected in national test results. Good assessment strategies lead to challenging targets for standards and these are often exceeded. Any exceptions, such as lower results in mathematics in 2004, are dealt with thoroughly with good results. The school is currently aiming to close the gap between standards in reading and in writing. The well above average standards achieved by Year 2 contribute well to this ambition but progress in writing slows in Years 3 and 4. Strategies in use in Years 5 and 6 compensate and promote continued good, and sometimes very good progress. Progress for pupils with learning difficulties is at least good and sometimes very good. The school responds well to individual difficulties and problems and support for these pupils is consistent, appropriate and helpful. Together with good opportunities for discussion, this also explains the good progress of the small number learning English as a new language. Pupils are prepared well for life and further learning through their good basic skills and good contributions to the school and local community. They have a good understanding of what to do and what not to do to be healthy.

Good improvements have been made to provision for information and communication technology (ICT), which was an issue in the last inspection. Resources are now at least adequate, standards are above average and pupils' progress is good. Recent improvements in clarifying learning objectives and setting targets for learning mean that pupils are better informed about where they need to improve but there is more work to be done to ensure that pupils are well informed on successes to be maintained as well as their areas for development.

Leadership and management are good and based firmly on effective self-evaluation systems. The maintenance and improvement on high standards since the last inspection confirms the school's good capacity for further improvement. There is more work to be done to ensure consistency of good practice throughout the school but the school is taking appropriate action. Governors are well involved in the management and self-evaluation of the school, showing good improvement since the last inspection.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

Improve standards in writing through:

- resolving inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4;
- improving pupils' understanding of their successes and areas for development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Standards are well above average, as reflected in national tests in Years 2 and 6 in 2006. Any deviations in these high standards are spotted quickly by the school and appropriate action is taken. Pupils' progress is good overall through from Reception to Year 6 but there are variations, evident in writing especially, in Years 3 and 4.

On admission to Reception, good teaching gets the children off to a good start. The learning goals set nationally for the end of the Reception year are consequently exceeded. Progress gains momentum and continues at a rapid pace through Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2). The good expertise and high expectations of teachers lead to well above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. In Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), progress is good overall but strongest for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Although standards by the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science, the school's data shows that more could be achieved in Years 3 and 4. The school is on the right path to resolving this dip in performance.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils are articulate, confident, friendly and keen to extend their learning. Attendance is above average and pupils have no hesitation in saying that they enjoy coming to school and feel safe and well cared for. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise for a healthy life style. They enjoy school and have an increasing understanding of the benefits of happiness and the need to resolve any problems. Behaviour is exceptionally good. Pupils' good sense of responsibility is evident in the respect shown for the newly appointed 'mediators' for playtimes, for example, and in the enjoyment older pupils show in helping younger ones with practising reading. The elected representatives on the school and class councils play an important role in helping to improve life in school and in making a good contribution to the wider community through activities such as recycling as they work towards an eco-award. The pupils' good basic skills mean that they are well prepared for future educational and economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is generally lively and stimulating so that pupils are interested and want to learn. Teachers help pupils to recap well on previous learning before embarking on new learning. Objectives set for lessons are usually clear so that pupils know what they have to learn. Pupils' above average skills in speaking and listening and good personal and social development are sustained and developed well throughout the school. Teachers' good use of questions challenges pupils' thinking and dialogue, encouraging them to explain their answers clearly. The pace of lessons is generally brisk so that pupils are able to concentrate well, work hard and progress quickly. Occasionally, the pace of teaching slows, work is not planned well enough to suit pupils' differing needs and consequently progress is less rapid. While teachers are well informed on pupils' progress and have set up systems of targets for learning, pupils themselves do not understand clearly enough their successes and areas for development. This applies to writing especially, where marking tends to lack clarity. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils' individual learning but are not always deployed as effectively during whole class discussions.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is broad, balanced and adjusted well to suit different age groups and pupils' differing needs; pupils are challenged well and want to learn. The school is open to innovative ideas and suggestions and are piloting different methods of organising the curriculum. Teachers in Years 5 and 6, for example, have arranged a successful team approach to teaching writing and plans are in hand to extend these effective arrangements to Years 3 and 4. The curriculum is in the process of review with the aim of including the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT more consistently across the whole curriculum. Staff are adept at ensuring that topics selected appeal equally well to boys and girls. Pupils' learning is enriched through an interesting programme of visits and visitors to school and by a good range of extra-curricular activities, available to both infant and junior pupils. Good links with local schools, colleges and other professionals help to support pupils' learning and contribute well to their personal and academic development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. The staff look after pupils well and required systems for child protection and safeguarding are in place. Relationships are very good throughout the school community, helping parents to feel happy to work in co-operation with staff and pupils to settle quickly, to feel appreciated and to learn with confidence. The school is very supportive of pupils and their families and will go

to considerable trouble to help resolve any individual problems that arise. A healthy lifestyle is promoted and healthy and very appetising meals are served each day. Older pupils share the responsibility of caring for younger ones, who find this reassuring and say they are most likely to share any problems at play-times with an older child. Good records are kept of assessment data and these are used well to plan further work and make improvements in the school's provision. Weaknesses in pupils' understanding of their own learning sometimes limit their rate of progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher leads a strongly motivated and dedicated team that has a long history of providing very well for pupils. This is evident in the well-established and steadily improving good standards in the school. Self-evaluation systems have been improved well in recent years to include greater rigour and develop a more comprehensive approach in order to highlight any difficulties for individual pupils or year groups. As a result, the headteacher and staff are accurately informed on strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance through the school. More time is needed, however, for the impact of the school's plans and action to impact on the inconsistencies identified in the quality of learning in lower Key Stage 2.

The work of the governing body has improved well since the last inspection. A team of experienced and well qualified governors has a good awareness of the school's performance, its undoubted successes but also its areas for development. Good improvements in the accommodation, resources and pupils' travel arrangements since the last inspection owe much to the perseverance of the governing body.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

Balshaw Lane Community Primary School

Bredon Avenue

Euxton

Chorley

Lancashire

PR7 6NS

09 February 2007

Dear Children,

Thank you for providing such a warm welcome for us in your school. You are very polite, helpful and friendly. This made sure that we enjoyed our visit. You answered our questions very well and made a good contribution to the inspection.

We found that Balshaw Lane is a good school and you and your parents are right to be proud to be part of it. The headteacher and all staff are kind and sensitive to your needs and you are right to feel safe and well cared for in school. You clearly know what is needed for a healthy life-style and the very good school dinners help you to achieve this. They helped the inspectors to work hard and stay healthy too!

We found that some important things in your school are good:

- the staff take very good care of you
- good teaching helps you to make good progress and achieve high standards
- your behaviour is excellent and this helps you to concentrate well on learning.

Some things that might get even better are:

- your writing, which is not quite as good as your reading or your numeracy
- the understanding you have of where exactly your work is good and how you might improve it next time
- some of the children in Years 3 and 4 need a little more help to progress as quickly as those in other year groups.

I know you will continue to work very hard with the teaching staff as they help you to get even better with your writing.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Penny Parrish

Lead inspector