

# Larkholme Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119299
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	301723
<b>Inspection dates</b>	28–29 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jennie Platt

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 category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	260
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr John Stelfox
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr John Goodhew
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Windermere Avenue Fleetwood Lancashire FY7 8QB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 874024
<b>Fax number</b>	01253 776048

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized school. It is located in an area that has pockets of social and economic disadvantage. An average number of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. Some pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds attend for a short time while their parents are training at the nearby nautical college. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities but an above average number of pupils have formal statements of special educational need. Nursery, breakfast and after school care are available on the same site.

## 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 that well deserves the high reputation it has in the community. Parents have a voice in the school and are very pleased with the education provided. One parent sums this up as a school that produces 'happy children, well-rounded and caring'. Personal development is excellent and the pupils thoroughly enjoy school as can be seen in their good attendance. Larkholme is a calm and orderly place to learn because behaviour is excellent and pupils are polite and respectful. They are eager to help others and understand their responsibilities to the school and the wider community. Many imaginative ideas, such as the job club, help pupils develop a better understanding of the world of work and combine well with their good basic skills to prepare them extremely well for their future. Year 6 pupils identified many special occasions about their school when writing a menu of their memories. One comment summed up many of them as 'two kilograms of brilliant smiles'. Good attention is given to pupils' health and physical fitness. The impact can be clearly seen in the energetic activities that take place at playtimes and the array of trophies that celebrate success in many sporting events.

Teaching and learning are good. This ensures that pupils achieve well. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Children make good progress and exceed the level expected for their age because of effective, lively teaching. Satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 leads to pupils reaching the level expected for their age in literacy and numeracy. However, teaching sometimes lacks challenge and the pace is not always sufficiently brisk to sustain pupils' interest; this slows down pupils' progress. Teaching is consistently good in Key Stage 2 and some outstanding teaching was seen. Lively lessons accelerate learning and progress is good. Work is accurately pinpointed to pupils' ability. Results of national tests and inspection evidence show that pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2 with above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching assistants play a full part in lessons because they are well prepared and clearly understand their roles. This is most helpful for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning through English as an additional language who also make good progress.

Care and guidance are good. This is a caring school and pupils say they feel safe and know how to look after themselves. Monitoring of pupils' academic performance is good overall but teachers at Key Stage 1 make insufficient use of assessment information when setting work to build on what children have learned in the Foundation Stage. The curriculum is satisfactory with strengths in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and enrichment through visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. Older pupils thoroughly appreciate the chance to go abroad with their friends. Pupils enjoy the special themed weeks that contribute to the good achievement as it adds richness to their experiences. The Foundation Stage is based on practical learning but opportunities for outdoor learning are limited because of space and resources.

Leadership and management are good. This has enabled the school to run smoothly and sustain high standards during a difficult year of staff changes and unavoidable absence. The school successfully achieves its aim to provide an education that maintains a focus on enjoyment. Governance is good. Self-evaluation is accurate and leads to a good capacity to improve, as there is a clear and accurate picture of the way ahead.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in Key Stage 1 to provide pupils with challenging work in all lessons.

- Make more use of assessment information at Key Stage 1 to check pupils' progress and to build successfully on their achievement in the Foundation Stage.
- Extend the outdoor space for children in the Foundation Stage.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good. Children start school with broadly typical skills except in literacy, where they are slightly lower than expected for their age. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of the good teaching, variety of activities and positive encouragement they receive from all staff. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children exceed the level expected. Achievement is good in reading and writing because of the many opportunities to practise their skills and this helps the children to overcome their earlier difficulties and reach the goals set for their age.

Pupils' progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but slows because their work lacks challenge and some pupils of all abilities could make better progress. This is because teachers are not always making enough use of assessment information to challenge pupils and to build on the skills and knowledge gained in the Foundation Stage. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Achievement accelerates in Key Stage 2 where teaching is more imaginative and tasks more challenging. The school's recent focus on writing has reaped benefits with better progress, especially for the more able pupils. Although data suggest boys did not do as well as girls in 2006, there is no pattern of girls doing better than boys. Results of national tests have been above average since 2004 and inspection evidence shows standards remain above average in English, mathematics and science. The school meets and often exceeds its challenging targets.

Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning through English as an additional language is good. These pupils make good progress and some do extremely well and leave school with above average standards.

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

### **Grade: 1**

The friendly atmosphere is evident as soon as one walks into the school. Pupils are extremely proud of their achievements and eagerly talk about their experiences. They greatly enjoy school and respond positively to all that is on offer. Relationships are excellent because pupils observe the positive interactions between adults in school. As one pupil said, 'We are all one big happy family'. This helps to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. They support each other as well as the needy in the wider community. In a village in Sri Lanka, a fishing boat called Lark Holme was purchased by funds raised by the pupils. The achievement of the national Healthy School Status reflects pupils' enthusiasm to keep healthy. Pupils enjoy applying for small jobs around school, which are rewarded with tokens called 'Larks' that can be exchanged for special treats. These activities and the pupils' good basic skills prepare them extremely well for the world of work.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils are polite and courteous. Older pupils are a delight to be with as they share their enthusiasm for their work and achievements. They have a clear sense of fair play and justice based on themes in lessons and assemblies. Links with a school in Blackburn, visits to a mosque and a visit from a Buddhist

monk are just a few examples of activities that lead to pupils having a real insight into faiths and traditions that are different to their own.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good and this contributes to pupils' good achievement. A strength in all lessons is the positive management of behaviour, often using considerable patience, that ensures lessons run smoothly. Teachers make good use of ICT to clarify and add interest. Year 6 pupils, for instance, were motivated to complete their tasks because the end product included a power point presentation to the rest of the school. Children in the Foundation Stage greatly enjoy learning because it is based on learning by doing. For instance, they learn about halves by cutting sandwiches and enjoy the exciting search around school for hidden shapes. Teaching is strong in Key Stage 2 and some outstanding teaching was seen. Teachers have a real enthusiasm for teaching and pupils refer to their teachers as 'fantastic'. They inspire their pupils and lessons are challenging, brisk and lead to effective learning. In Key Stage 1, teaching is always satisfactory, but it is less imaginative and the overuse of worksheets that are not pinpointed accurately to pupils' ability slows progress. Throughout the school, the use of teaching assistants is very good. They are prepared well and so know their role in lessons. Those supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good on-going assessments to ensure that when one target is reached another is set. Although some good examples of marking were seen, it is inconsistent across the school as it does not always tell pupils what they have done well or how to improve their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The strong emphasis on personal development from the day they start school underpins the curriculum and helps pupils to become confident and mature. The school is working to adapt the curriculum more closely to pupils' needs. This includes identifying more specifically how subjects link and the ways in which literacy and numeracy skills are to be extended in other subjects. Information and communication technology is a strong feature of the curriculum and is used increasingly to support learning, as shown in a good literacy lesson in Year 6. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good and firmly based on learning through practical activities. However, opportunities for children to extend their learning outdoors are restricted because of the small space and limited resources.

The curriculum is enriched well; pupils particularly enjoy the residential visit to France and the themed weeks. They are eagerly anticipating the forthcoming week planned around under-the-sea activities. Healthy lifestyles are promoted with a wide range of sporting and other extra-curricular provision. The school has good links with other schools and organisations to enhance its provision.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are well cared for in a happy and welcoming learning environment. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers agree wholeheartedly with this. Relationships are very good;

pupils trust their teachers and are happy to talk over any worries or concerns with them. Child protection and systems to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. The school's Family Learning Mentor provides valuable support for those needing extra help, and often their families, enabling these pupils to be fully included in all that the school has to offer and to make good progress in their personal development.

The tracking of pupils' academic progress is good overall and the school can now track individual progress from Reception to Year 6. However, these systems are relatively new and in Key Stage 1 are used insufficiently to make sure that all pupils build on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good as shown by the maintenance of high standards whilst managing a school with falling rolls and unavoidable staff absence that reduced the school's senior management team. The headteacher provides good leadership through his enthusiasm and vision. He is determined that the school will succeed because every child matters. The senior management team and subject leaders fully support him. A strong feature is the deployment of teaching assistants who make an effective contribution to the good progress made by pupils. The musical expertise of two teaching assistants has been used most effectively to support the teaching of music.

Through its self-evaluation, the school has an accurate view of how well it is doing. Subject leaders know what is needed to improve provision and so help to raise standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. They produce subject action plans that identify clear strategies to improve but they are insufficiently explicit in showing how their effectiveness is to be measured.

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection. All issues identified then have been successfully addressed. Additionally, standards have risen and resources for ICT have improved and support learning well. Governance is good. The governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively because they know the school well. They support and challenge the school's management appropriately and follow up spending decisions to check on their effectiveness. The school provides good value for money.

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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>	<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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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

<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>	3
<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.

## Annex A

**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	3
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**

3 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Larkholme Primary School, Lancashire, FY7 8QB

Thank you so much for the friendly and polite way you welcomed the inspectors to your school. You attend a good and happy school. We were very impressed by your excellent behaviour and the care you showed to us and to each other. The wonderful photograph of the Lark Holme boat in Sri Lanka must make you feel very proud of your efforts to help others. This is typical of your kindness and willingness to be supportive of those needing help. Those amazing trophies on display in the hall also show how you enjoy sport and keeping fit and healthy. Keep it up!

You are correct when you say teaching is good and you appreciate that teachers are supportive and help you if you have any problems. Teachers assess your progress carefully and are looking closely at improving the achievement of pupils in Key Stage 1 so that it is as good as that of the older pupils. Children in the Reception class have great fun and there is much giggling and lively artwork taking place in their class. They do not have a lot of space or imaginative resources when they work outside and the school is looking for ways to improve this, especially with more new children starting next term.

I hope you all enjoyed your theme about under the sea activities. You have teachers who join in and make learning exciting for you. No wonder you described them as 'fantastic'. Year 6 pupils shared many happy memories of the time in Larkholme School and I know these happy experiences will stay with them for a long time. I wish you all every happiness for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J E Platt

Lead Inspector