

Clarendon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105153
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308781
Inspection dates	3–4 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Connor
Headteacher	Miss Richardson
Date of previous school inspection	18 October 2004
School address	Clarendon Street Bolton Lancashire BL3 6SF
Telephone number	01204 333411
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school, which was built in 1885, serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage close to the town centre. The great majority of pupils belong to a variety of minority ethnic groups but around two thirds are of Indian heritage; over 80% speak English as an additional language with around 60% at an early stage of learning English. A small number belong to families who are refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion eligible to receive free school meals is above average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but the distribution is uneven between year groups. The school holds the Bronze Eco Award. The headteacher took up her post in September 2007 on the retirement of the previous, longstanding headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This good school, which pupils describe as 'a school for all people,' serves its community well and gives good value for money. It enables its pupils, the overwhelming majority of whom enter the school with low level skills, to make good progress and achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked successfully to involve parents in their children's education. Parents appreciate the opportunities to meet staff at the beginning of each day and the increased information about what, and how, their children are learning. The new-style reports make very clear to parents how well their children are achieving and the levels they are working at. The school also works in close partnership with other schools, local community groups and outside agencies to enhance its provision for pupils.

Pupils' overall achievement is good but over recent years progress has been slower between Year 3 and Year 6 than for younger pupils. The school's actions are beginning to bring about improvements here but, as yet, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory rather than good and, particularly in mathematics, standards are not high enough. Pupils' outstanding personal development, excellent behaviour and warm relationships ensure that the school operates as a welcoming, harmonious community in which each member is valued and respected. Pupils are very well aware of how to stay physically and emotionally safe and healthy. All those spoken with agree that they enjoy school. They are keen contributors to the community and leave the school well prepared to benefit from the next stage of their education.

Good quality teaching and learning underpin the good progress that pupils are now making throughout the school. Teachers explain tasks well and are very supportive of pupils but they do not yet make clear enough to them what they should be aiming for or how to improve their work. Pupils are willing learners but even the older ones are reluctant to use their initiative and they need much encouragement to work independently. This reticence is holding back the more adventurous thinking that could take them to the next level in their work. The curriculum is well adapted to engage pupils' interest with good use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for learning and plenty of visits, visitors and extra activities. Very good support for those who are new to the country or at an early stage of learning English ensures that they settle swiftly into routines and quickly pick up enough language to help them make good progress alongside their peers. The pastoral care for individuals is very strong. Parents comment that it helps their children to grow in confidence; pupils say that, 'The school takes care of you.'

The school has run successfully for many years and good leadership and management are helping to ensure that this continues. Leaders at all levels provide clear direction and are increasingly accountable for pupils' progress. As parents comment, 'The new headteacher is a big hit with both parents and children alike. She's approachable and makes an effort.' Pupils' progress is on the up, morale is high, and staff are confident and capable of bringing about change. The school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's skills when they join the Nursery are well below those expected for their age, particularly in their language, communication and mathematical development. Well focused, effective leadership and good quality teaching ensure that they make a good start to their

learning. The stimulating environment and well planned curriculum, that includes a wide range of visits and visitors, really extend children's first-hand experiences and enjoyment of learning. As a result, they make good, and often very good, progress in the Foundation Stage. Most are still working below the expected levels in letter and sound recognition, writing and mathematical calculation by the time they enter Year 1 but in other areas of learning their skills are broadly as expected for their age. Staff place much emphasis on developing children's spoken language and encouraging them to make choices and develop independence. The outdoor area and resources have improved since the previous inspection. Good induction procedures, including the recently formed mother and toddler group, ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Staff work well together as a team and parents really appreciate the help they receive to support their children's learning at home.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics.
- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and become more independent learners.
- Improve teachers' use of target setting and marking so that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

In Key Stage 1, pupils build well on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage so that results at the end of Year 2 are usually broadly average overall, although relatively few pupils achieve the higher levels expected for this age group. Over recent years, pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has been satisfactory, with most progress made in Year 6. Overall, standards are broadly average but in 2007 results at the end of Year 6 fell to below average, after rising for the previous three years. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in mathematics was significantly lower than average. This year group included large proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who joined the school during Key Stage 2, sometimes directly from abroad, but too few pupils made good progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Increasingly rigorous assessment and the actions taken over recent months, such as small-group teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2, are having a positive impact. All groups of pupils throughout the school are now making good progress but Key Stage 2 pupils still have some catching up to do to reach their full potential, especially in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

High quality relationships among pupils and with staff impact on every aspect of school life, fulfilling its mission statement, 'Together we shine.' Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their positive attitudes to all the opportunities it offers them, their outstanding behaviour and their above average attendance. They demonstrate their clear understanding of how to stay safe and healthy by their sensible movement around the rambling building and lively displays of, for instance, the importance of sleep, exercise and fruit. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They work and play together in harmony, showing respect for and genuine interest in the many different cultures and beliefs represented in the school. They understand how to make the right choices and they are thoughtful, helpful and polite. Pupils are keen to make a contribution through becoming, for instance, school councillors,

Clarendon Carers or by leading playtime games for younger children. They are proud that, 'It's not always what the teacher thinks; we get to join in the decisions.' Eco-club members have raised awareness of environmental issues and worked to develop areas in school and the local community. Activities such as running the stationery shop and the sale of fruit help pupils to develop skills to support their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' good knowledge of individuals and pupils' willingness to learn mean that classrooms throughout the school are orderly, supportive places in which to work. Teachers use their good subject knowledge to provide clear instructions and explanations, placing a strong emphasis on increasing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. Most teachers successfully encourage pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion. Their questioning extends pupils' thinking and observational skills. Teachers and pupils use ICT very well to enhance the quality of learning. Experienced teaching assistants skilfully support vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at an early stage of learning English. While teachers usually plan work to cater for pupils' different abilities, it is not always well matched to their needs and sometimes tasks go on for too long. Pupils are not sufficiently aware of how to organise their work for themselves and, when left for any length of time without adult input, many show themselves at a loss as to how to set about an activity. Teachers do not consistently set targets for pupils or give them guidance through their marking about what they need to do next to improve their work. The school recognises that both teachers' marking and pupils' independence are areas to work on in order to raise pupils' levels of achievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good links made between subjects that bring pupils' learning to life in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are now being extended to Key Stage 2. ICT is used very well to help pupils learn across a range of subjects. For example, they use data-logging in science and create websites and podcasts. French is taught discretely in Key Stage 2 and is integrated across the curriculum from Nursery upwards. A strong programme promotes pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education very successfully. Good quality provision, including bilingual support, ensures that those who arrive at the school with little or no English settle swiftly and can actively participate in lessons. The curriculum rightly places a strong emphasis on speaking and listening to develop pupils' language skills and extend their knowledge and understanding. Recent developments in the mathematics curriculum are beginning to improve achievement in this area. Themed weeks, visits and visitors widen pupils' horizons and add greatly to their enjoyment. Popular extra activities, ranging from martial arts to power walking, take place at various times of the day to ensure that pupils can participate whatever their other commitments.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for in a supportive and harmonious learning environment. The required arrangements to safeguard their health, safety and well-being are in place. Pupils are treated very much as individuals and the stimulating displays of their work around the school effectively

celebrate their successes and boost their self-esteem. They say that there is always someone with whom to talk over any worries. The learning mentor provides invaluable support to the more vulnerable pupils and often to their parents or carers. The individual needs of those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or who are at an early stage of learning English, are carefully identified. Pupils are then very well supported by a committed team of skilled teaching assistants. The academic guidance for pupils is not as strong as the pastoral support because teachers are not yet consistently using the newly introduced systems for target setting and marking. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about what they have done well or the next steps to take in their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good quality leadership and management ensure that staff work together effectively as a team in pupils' best interests. The dynamic and very experienced new headteacher has successfully gained the respect and appreciation of staff, parents and pupils and is building skilfully on the long-established strengths of the school. The newly extended leadership team and clear expectations of leaders in all areas are helping to develop a strong sense of direction and shared responsibility for pupils' progress. Good opportunities for staff to further their professional development, combined with encouragement to 'have a go', are resulting in an enthusiastic, increasingly confident staff who are full of ideas on how to improve things. Increasing rigour in the recording, analysis and monitoring of pupils' standards, now in its third year but much sharpened over recent months, is leading to earlier identification of those who are falling behind. This prompts action, such as reallocation of teaching assistants to different areas or a closer focus on specific areas in mathematics. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. School self-evaluation is accurate, resources are used efficiently and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The governing body is supportive and is increasing both its understanding of its role and its willingness to hold the school to account.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

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?	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.

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work and play. We agree with you that yours is a good school and we are pleased that you would recommend it to other children.

One of the best things about Clarendon is you yourselves! It was a delight to see how well you get on with each other and how respectful you are of other people's cultures, beliefs and needs. You also behave extremely well and have a really good understanding of how to live healthy, safe lifestyles. You pay good attention in lessons and are keen to contribute to the community. Another good thing is that all the staff care for you very well so that you grow in confidence and can concentrate on learning. In lessons, your teachers explain the activities clearly and the teaching assistants help to make sure that everyone understands what to do. Both you and your teachers use the computers well to support your learning. You have lots of opportunities to practise your speaking and listening skills.

We know that you have already noticed some differences in school this year, such as more opportunities to visit places of interest. It is clear that your headteacher and other senior staff have a good idea of what needs to be done and how to improve things. We have suggested to them that, to make your school even better, they should:

- make sure that pupils in Key Stage 2 achieve higher standards, especially in mathematics
- help you all to become better at using your initiative and working independently
- make sure that teachers make clearer to you what you should be aiming for and what you need to do next to improve your work.

You can help by continuing to attend school regularly and enjoy learning and especially by trying to think for yourselves how to go about your work.