

Johnson Fold Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105157
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308782
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Alston

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	192
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Morgan
Headteacher	Mrs Ruth Dean
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
School address	Worston Avenue Johnson Fold Bolton Lancashire BL1 5UG
Telephone number	01204 333011
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is in an area with a high level of social disadvantage, which is reflected in the well above average number of pupils eligible for free school meals. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Childrens' levels of attainment on entry to the school are well below those expected for their age. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and a very small proportion are from a range of minority ethnic groups. A newly opened Children's Centre for accessing children's services is attached to the school. After a period without a permanent headteacher, or a deputy headteacher, the new headteacher took up her post in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

After a period of instability in staffing at leadership level, capacity has been significantly strengthened by the appointment of a new headteacher who has recently taken up her post. Important changes are already under way and tangible gains are being made. Given the determination of the new management team and good role modelling it demonstrates, the school provides a satisfactory standard of education. School leaders' priority is to create a supportive climate for the school community in order to help pupils learn more effectively. The staff are strongly committed to provide the best in meeting pupils' personal needs. As a result, the school has developed close and effective ties with a wide range of different agencies to support the pupils in raising their self-esteem, developing self-control and gaining basic skills. Pupils and parents benefit from discussions with a mentor, strong links with the Children's Services Team and chances to participate in before-and after- school provision. A measure of the success of this good pastoral work is reflected in parents' views. A typical comment is: 'It's great to know there is somewhere to go where people listen and you can get help.' It is also evident in the way the pupils eat healthily, take exercise, and in their good behaviour and relationships with one another and adults. The pupils say they feel safe, secure and very happy in school, although their attendance is well below average. The school's academic provision is not as strong. Management issues and pockets of ineffective teaching have hampered improvements in academic provision. Both issues are in the process of being tackled successfully.

Children's skills when they start school are well below expected levels and are particularly weak in language. By the end of Year 6, standards remain well below average and this represents broadly satisfactory achievement. In recent Year 6 national tests, results have been well below average including in writing, and the more able pupils in particular have not done well enough. The school has identified these weaknesses and has put a number of initiatives in place. The result is that pupils' work and current data provide a convincing picture of improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make expected progress because of the good support of classroom assistants.

Teaching is satisfactory and an improving picture is emerging. New procedures to check on progress are impacting positively. Teaching is strong in lessons that have pace and challenge. Teaching is weaker when work set for pupils is not matched accurately to their varying needs, especially for the more able pupils. In writing, the setting of individual targets is helping pupils to understand how they can improve and is supporting their progress. This is less effective in other subjects. The curriculum is satisfactory and is strongly enriched by visitors and visits to a range of interesting places, which make learning active and real.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is building a positive team spirit amongst staff, raising expectations and supporting teachers whose management skills are developing well. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The school evaluates its performance accurately. Managers are beginning to make full use of self-evaluation to help raise standards and improve achievement. Governance is satisfactory and recent changes have helped them to hold the school to account. The school gives satisfactory value for money and has a good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Effective leadership by the Foundation Stage leader has lessened the impact of staff disruption, ensuring that children's personal and academic achievement are satisfactory. On entry to school, children's skills and knowledge are well below the level expected for three-year-olds. They make satisfactory progress overall but do not reach expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. They achieve well in social development. Learning is thoughtfully organised and carefully tailored to develop their basic skills. Sound teaching takes place in a warm, caring and supportive environment. However, limited space and large equipment limits the contribution that can be made by the outside area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing and for the more able pupils.
- Improve the setting of targets in all subjects.
- Improve attendance.
- Provide an adequately sized and resourced outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

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.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as other pupils. Standards are below average by the end of Year 2, but well below average in writing. Achievement in Key Stage 1 is strongest in reading and mathematics, but achievement in writing is much weaker, especially for the more able pupils. Current school data indicates well below average standards in Year 6 and they are particularly weak in writing, with only a small proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels or above. The school is rightly focusing on raising standards in writing through setting challenging targets and the careful tracking of pupils' progress. These initiatives are beginning to have an impact on achievement. In Years 2 and 6, trends in the national assessments and tests have shown satisfactory achievement up to 2007 when results fell significantly in Year 6 because of the instability in leadership and staffing. As a result the school did not meet its targets. However, with recent changes, the school is now on track to meet this year's targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are generally well behaved and welcoming to visitors. Most like school and enjoy learning. They like to develop new skills and take part in all that the school provides. The school council is making a positive contribution to the school's work, for example, in enhancing playground facilities. Pupils say there is very little bullying or harassment but that, when incidents do occur, they are dealt with swiftly. Attendance is below average but recently introduced strategies to address this are having a positive effect. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good sense of right and wrong and relate well to each other and to adults. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, such as through their support of various charities, and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They

develop self-esteem and confidence because their efforts and achievements are valued and rewarded through the use of special certificates and assemblies. Pupils develop satisfactory social skills to equip them for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Two new teachers and the rigorous monitoring of learning, which have raised expectations, are impacting positively on teaching. There are good features in many lessons. Teachers' caring relationships with pupils generate positive attitudes to learning. Their strong subject knowledge, conscientious planning and sensitive questioning ensure that pupils clearly understand tasks. Less successful lessons result when the pace is too slow and tasks fail to challenge pupils fully. At times, teachers do not actively involve pupils at the start of the lesson and this results in a lessening of pupils' motivation. Teachers mark pupils' work very carefully and pupils respond well to the useful comments that make clear how they can improve their work. The teaching and support for pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties is appropriate. As a result, these pupils make satisfactory progress and their self-esteem is improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, enabling most pupils to develop personal skills well. Provision for the development of pupils' academic skills is satisfactory. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and lessons are planned to enable pupils to consider tolerance, respect and acceptance of people's differences. Pupils' academic achievement is supported adequately by sound provision for English, mathematics, and information and communication technology. The school is looking to provide a more relevant, exciting curriculum by linking subjects together and providing pupils opportunities to relate school learning to real-life situations. The wide range of after-school clubs enriches curricular provision and enhances pupils' sporting, artistic and musical talents effectively. The support given by external agencies, visitors and links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents are accurate in their view that the school is 'very caring and supportive.' Procedures for maintaining pupils' health and safety and child protection meet requirements. Pupils say they feel safe and secure. Staff work closely with parents/carers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Effective use is made of the support of outside agencies in relation to education, health and community policing. Academic guidance is satisfactory. New procedures are in place for checking on the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. This is raising the expectations of both teachers and pupils and is helping to identify where there is underachievement. Strategies are in place to help pupils who are experiencing difficulties in their work. As a result, pupils are receiving clear guidance and support for their academic development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and this is an improving picture. The headteacher and senior staff have quickly formed an enthusiastic and committed team who share a clear vision for improvement. The monitoring of teaching is becoming more focused and rigorous. As a result, management tools are beginning to have an impact on improving teaching, which in turn is improving pupils' progress. The school is more rigorous in monitoring its performance. The school's evaluation procedures have correctly identified how well it performs, and identifies key areas for improvement. The school has a number of new initiatives aimed at improving standards but these are too new to have had a significant impact. The school benefits from enthusiastic support from governors, who are becoming effective critical friends and keeping a closer check on performance.

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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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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?	3
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	3
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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Johnson Fold Community Primary School, Bolton, BL1 5UG

After spending two days in your school, I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to thank you for making the experience a very enjoyable one. We came to see how well your school is performing and you helped us a great deal. The good behaviour and friendliness showed to us are a credit to you all and helped us to judge just how well you and your school are doing.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. Several of you commented on having 'good friends' and being able to 'talk to any of the adults who care for us a lot'. You are right. Your school is a caring school. Your new headteacher is very committed to you all being successful and has your well-being at the centre of all she does. She and all the staff are trying to make learning interesting, helping you to achieve as well as you can. They try to make school enjoyable and exciting with the visits you go on and also through the many visitors who come to school. We were pleased to see how hard you work, but equally important is how well you all get on with each other. We saw lots of pupils who have responsibilities and do them well, particularly the school council and the fundraising projects in which you are involved. We were also very pleased to see all the clubs you have. You take regular exercise, and sport is important to you.

I'm sure your teachers always say, 'This is fine but you could make it even better if you....' Well, this is what I am saying to your school. Your teachers need to try to get you to reach higher standards, especially in writing. This applies in particular to those of you who are more able. Teachers set you targets in writing and I know you feel this helps you understand what you need to do to improve. I would like to see them also set you targets in other areas of your learning.

One thing you could do is to make sure you attend regularly. And finally, the school needs to provide a much better outdoor play area for the youngest children.