

Lostock Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105174
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308787
Inspection dates	14–15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Crouch

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	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Allanson
Headteacher	Miss Gill Smith
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2005
School address	Glengarth Drive Lostock Bolton Lancashire BL6 4PS
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves a residential suburb of Bolton. It is oversubscribed in most year groups. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average overall, but well above average in particular year groups. Children's skills on entry to the Reception class are broadly typical for their age. The school is an Investor in People and holds the Bronze Eco-school Award.

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 caring school, which provides a satisfactory standard of education. In recent years the school has experienced significant staffing changes, which have particularly affected the school leadership. Since 2006 the headteacher has succeeded in restructuring the leadership and management team, placing a greater focus on tracking pupils' progress, addressing areas of underperformance and raising standards. Awareness of these changes has led the school to overestimate the effectiveness of some aspects of its work because it is not yet able to demonstrate the impact of the changes on pupils' progress.

Pupils enjoy school. This is reflected in their good attendance, although not all pupils are punctual, which sometimes disrupts learning at the start of the school day. Visitors are welcomed with interest by the pupils who talk about their school with confidence and enthusiasm. Staff and pupils work well together to produce a calm, happy and optimistic setting where pupils behave well and want to learn. The school takes good care of its pupils, who say that they feel safe and secure and that there is always someone to turn to at times of need. The small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated into the school because of the good racial harmony. Pupils are very aware of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. This is reflected in their choice of healthy meals at lunchtime and their keenness to participate in sporting activities, which the school and other organisations provide. The school council provides a vehicle for pupils to express their views and contribute to the life of the school, for example, through their work to develop a natural habitat in the school grounds. Pupils have a good awareness of the needs of others. For example, they willingly support a wide range of charities and give help to the needy in the local community. However, opportunities are occasionally missed to celebrate the cultural diversity of the school community.

Above average standards at the beginning and end of Key Stage 1 indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress. This satisfactory progress is maintained through Key Stage 2 so that pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 with standards that are above average. Pupils' attainment at Key Stage 2 is consistently above national average in science. Attainment in English and mathematics is not as good. In 2007, attainment in English was broadly average. This was because fewer than expected pupils achieved the higher level in English, especially in writing.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching promotes the learning of most pupils effectively. However, planning does not always take sufficient account of the needs of individuals and different groups of learners, such as the more able or those who find learning more difficult. Consequently, these pupils do not progress as well as they might. There are instances of good and better teaching where the pace is brisk and there is a good balance between teacher-led and independent activities, which are well matched to the needs of learners. Pupils see a purpose to their learning and teachers make good use of questioning to challenge them. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, however, so not all pupils are aware of how they might improve. Subject leaders work well together to improve the curriculum and share good practice. Learning is enriched through a good range of extra-curricular activities, including sign language, cheerleading, a wide range of musical activities and many school visits.

The headteacher and governors have created a supportive school where staff work well together. There is an agreed vision for the school and a well-planned approach to developing the confidence and competence of teachers and teaching assistants, as indicated by the school's

Investors in People status. This means that increasingly good use is made of the school's resources. The school works well with outside organisations to promote the well-being of all pupils. However, it has lost the confidence of a small, but significant, number of parents who say that the school does not take sufficient account of their views or give them sufficient opportunities to contribute to their children's education.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Reception class their skills are, in general, as expected for their ages. While social skills are good, skills in writing and number are close to national expectations. Good teaching and support enable all children to make good progress, including those who find learning more difficult. This means that standards are above those typically expected at the end of the Reception year. There are good arrangements for introducing children to school. Clearly established routines provide structure and stability and mean that children quickly develop a high degree of confidence and independence and positive attitudes to learning. Children work in a safe and stimulating environment. The indoor areas are interesting and provide an appropriate focus on personal development and basic skills, as well as the wider curriculum. Recent building work has disrupted the outdoor curriculum/learning area and, as a result, temporary arrangements do not provide sufficient challenge and stimulation. Leadership and management are very effective and ensure that staff work well together to build on children's experiences and identify learning needs. Good links with support agencies and regular communication with parents have a positive impact on children's progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics.
- Improve teaching so that it meets the needs of different groups of pupils and is consistent in informing pupils of how they might improve their work.
- Improve links with parents and carers so that they have more opportunities to support the work of the school.

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

Achievement is satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6. From standards that are above average when pupils enter Year 1, pupils make satisfactory progress so that attainment is above average at the end of Year 2. In 2007, standards at Key Stage 1 were above average, although girls performed less well than boys in reading and writing. In recent years there has been some inconsistency in the standards attained at Key Stage 2, particularly in English and mathematics. Standards in science have been consistently above national averages. In 2007, pupils met their targets in science and mathematics, and attainment was above average. Weaknesses in writing resulted in significantly fewer than expected pupils achieving Level 5 in English. As a result, attainment in English was broadly average. Recent improvements in the arrangements for tracking progress mean that the school now has a clear view of the progress each pupil is making in English and mathematics. This enables it to quickly put into place appropriate support strategies such as deploying a teaching assistant to work with individuals or groups of pupils.

The school's analysis of data has identified that pupils who join the school other than at the usual time, often make slower progress than their classmates, particularly in English. These tracking strategies are beginning to lead to improved standards and progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy coming to this harmonious school and quickly develop self-confidence and an enthusiasm for learning. Attendance is well above the national average but poor punctuality of a small number of pupils can disrupt their learning at the beginning of the day. Pupils' moral and social development is good and leads to them having good awareness of the needs of others. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. While pupils are, for example, given opportunities to reflect in assemblies and lessons, opportunities to develop spirituality and celebrate the cultural diversity of the community in which the pupils live are not always taken. Older pupils provide good role models and good support for younger pupils. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as working as monitors and play leaders. However, the school does not create sufficient opportunities for many of these lively and articulate young people to contribute to school improvement and play a wider role in the community. Pupils are making good progress in developing their skills in information and communication technology (ICT), but their satisfactory progress in literacy and numeracy, and relatively limited opportunities to participate in enterprise activities mean they are making satisfactory progress in developing the skills they will need for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Although there is some good and better teaching, planning does not always provide sufficient guidance for the less able or set an appropriate level of challenge for the more able. As a result, some pupils do not progress as well as they might. Good subject knowledge helps teachers approach lessons with confidence and establish good working relationships with their pupils. Teachers make good use of praise and pupils are keen to contribute to the lesson because they know their ideas will be valued. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used effectively to bring lessons to life, and pupils have good access to computers to carry out research and enhance the presentation of their work. Teaching assistants are a valuable part of the teaching team. They are deployed effectively to provide sensitive, well-focused support for groups and individuals. Pupils' work is marked regularly and there are good examples of the use of rewards to encourage high standards. However, there are inconsistencies in the quality of marking and the help given to pupils to assess their progress. As a result, pupils are not always given sufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of most learners; however, it does not always provide enough challenge or opportunities for more able pupils to make good progress. It places an appropriate emphasis on developing skills in literacy, numeracy, and ICT. The school's approach to teaching a number of subjects through integrating subjects makes lessons more interesting and relevant

for pupils. For example, links between history and design technology, stemmed from a visit to a Tudor mansion, led to pupils reflecting on how the design of a chair is influenced by its purpose and the available materials. All pupils are encouraged to play a musical instrument and pupils in Years 2 to 6 study French. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and the school is responding to the requests of parents and pupils by arranging some sports matches after school. A wide range of educational visits, including a residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6 adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school makes good provision for safeguarding its pupils and has developed a supportive ethos. Teachers know their pupils well and are committed to fostering their well-being. Procedures are in place for raising pupils' awareness of their academic targets. However, these are not applied consistently in all classes and, as a result, some pupils are not as well informed as they might be of the progress they are making and what they need to do to improve. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs receive good support. A particular example of this is the nurture group, which helps to promote pupils' self-esteem, confidence and a sense of security. The school maintains links with parents through its weekly newsletter, and programme of parents' evenings, which are very well attended. However, a small number of parents say that the school does not always respond to their concerns, or take account of their views. Written reports to parents do not always give sufficient information about the progress their children are making. Good links with partner high schools ensure that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and governing body have created a strong sense of common purpose among staff. Leaders and managers have clear roles and responsibilities and are aware of the school's strengths and of those aspects where they want to do better. Recent developments mean that all staff are becoming increasingly involved in improvement planning and evaluating the work of the school. The school improvement plan is used effectively to promote change and guide the work of subject leaders. The use of assessment data to inform planning is well established in English and mathematics, but other subject leaders are in the early stages of evaluating the impact of teaching on learning and pupils' progress. The governing body has a clear understanding of its role and responsibilities. It is developing the capacity to challenge the work of the school and is becoming increasingly involved in the self-evaluation process. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing issues raised at the last inspection and gives satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so polite and friendly. I enjoyed talking to you and hearing all of the things you like about your school. I found that your school gives you a satisfactory education and helps you reach good standards. Here are some of the things I judged to be good about your school.

- The good care everyone takes of you.
- How hard all the staff and governors work to do their best for you.
- Your good behaviour and how well you all get on together.
- The way your headteacher works so hard with lots of people and groups to help you in your education.

There are three important things that could be better and so I have asked the school to:

- help you reach higher standards and make better progress in English and mathematics
- make sure that the activities teachers provide and the work you are set give you the opportunity to make good progress in all lessons
- improve links with your parents so that they are able to help more with your learning.

Of course, you also have an important part to play in helping your school to carry on improving. You can do this by continuing to be as positive about learning as you are now and keep trying to improve all aspects of your work.

Thanks again for making me feel so welcome.