

Kearsley West Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105186
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308793
Inspection date	4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Tina Addison
Headteacher	Mr Bernard Wright
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Primrose Street Kearsley Bolton Lancashire BL4 9BZ
Telephone number	01204 332600
Fax number	01204 332601

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: whether standards in Key Stage 1 are high enough; the quality of standards and achievement in writing; strategies to improve low attendance rates; the impact of attendance on achievement and standards. The inspector gathered evidence from school documentation; interviews with pupils, staff and governors; observing lessons and other activities and analysing parents' questionnaires and comments. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves a mainly White British population and a small proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The local area has above average social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Children's skills on entry to the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) are below expected levels. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Healthy Schools, Basic Skills Quality Mark 3, Investors in People and the School Achievement Award on two occasions.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The inspector agrees with the school's accurate and effective self-evaluation that it is good and provides good value for money. Parents and pupils are satisfied with the caring learning environment where pupils are constantly encouraged to do their best; a typical view is 'I believe Kearsley West is a good school to attend and improves year-on-year.'

Pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Moral and social development are particularly effective and foster good behaviour, strong attitudes to school and work, and a clear enjoyment of school. This is also shown in the much improved attendance which is now satisfactory. Pupils know and understand that it is important to lead healthy and safe lifestyles and that they must contribute to these personally, particularly around the school. Moreover, pupils make a good contribution to the day-to-day running of the school, for example, through their effective school council and in important jobs like 'playground pals'. Younger pupils particularly appreciate the help and guidance of the older ones and all pupils feel safe and secure.

Achievement and standards are good because this caring school provides good teaching and a strong curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for future education and life. From a below average starting point on entry to the Foundation Stage, pupils progress well. National data show the school performing really well in relation to all other schools. Standards at the end of Year 6 are often above average. Writing is the weakest area because the quality of marking and guidance is inconsistent across the school and, therefore, progress is patchy. In national tests, results at the end of Year 2 were significantly below average up to 2005. The headteacher and senior colleagues rightly judged that this picture was not good enough. Changes in staffing and curriculum have brought about good improvement and results in 2006 were significantly above average. Early indications from the 2007 results show this improvement has been maintained. By the end of Year 6, results in the national tests have regularly been above average in English, mathematics and science. While science is the strongest subject, there is still room for improvement in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and the gifted and talented are making good progress. Boys did better than girls in 2006.

Teaching is good and promotes effective learning. Typical strengths include well planned and well managed lessons that foster pupils' lively approach and eagerness to learn. Teachers know their subjects well and promote confidence in learners. Work is well matched to pupils' learning needs, often through the use of group targets. Many lessons pay good attention to improving pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) but opportunities to use these skills are not evident in all subjects. The quality of marking and the use of individual learning targets are a little inconsistent, particularly in pupils' written work. Where targets are effectively used the marking makes it absolutely clear how well the pupils are progressing and what they need to do to improve further, but in writing, this is not always clear. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support from teaching assistants and progress well towards their individual targets.

Pupils find the good curriculum to be interesting and challenging. This is because the school has been diligent in developing a programme that promotes pupils' academic and personal development well. For example, the school has recently focused a lot of attention and resources on improving reading skills, particularly for the boys. 'Reading buddies' were introduced and

trained; the school's evaluation shows that this has led to improvement, particularly for younger pupils. Moreover, important health and safety learning is emphasised by timely visits from police, fire and health professionals. The school effectively uses the religious education curriculum, together with visitors, to broaden pupils' knowledge and understanding of the variety of cultures in this country but more could be done to use the rich and diverse nature of the locality. The school successfully modifies the curriculum for specific groups to make good progress towards their own learning targets, such as the use of individual education plans for those with extra learning needs. Enrichment is good and there is a wide range of visits, visitors and activities outside lessons. Pupils say they particularly enjoy the visits by musicians. Good links with a local secondary school means that a teacher visits to teach French.

Care, guidance and support are good. The school knows its pupils and families well and this is much appreciated by parents and pupils alike. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and that they always have someone to turn to if a need arises. This is because the school has effectively instituted procedures and practices that support pupils' personal development. These include good and welcome contributions from older pupils who take their responsibilities seriously. Safeguarding procedures meet current government requirements. Child protection practices and risk assessments are robust. The monitoring of behaviour is thorough. As a result, pupils say that any rare incidences of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with promptly and well. Procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' academic achievements are good and the school has a comprehensive picture of pupils' progress. The use of the information is not always used effectively, however, to plan for challenging written work and this is a contributory factor in progress in writing being slower than in other subjects. Effective links with outside agencies support pupils with extra learning needs.

Good and enthusiastic leadership and management successfully drive both the school's effective provision and pupils' achievements. The headteacher leads this happy and achieving school well. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and staff of the school and together they are increasingly adept at identifying and improving the school's strengths and areas for development. For example, there have been significant improvements in standards at the end of Year 2. The good quality of the school's self-evaluation leads to an improvement plan that effectively sets out challenging targets and the priorities for development. Improvement since the previous inspection has been good and the school has a good capacity to progress further. Nevertheless, some monitoring and use of data are not yet sharp enough, particularly in evaluating pupils' writing. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are highly supportive of the school, but are too reliant on school managers for evaluation rather than instituting their own procedures.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is effective because strong management promotes good provision and ensures children progress well. In the Nursery, children settle quickly and this is due to the close liaison with parents before children start. By the time children enter Year 1, standards are broadly typical for the age of the children. Throughout this stage of learning, role play and other communication activities play a prominent part and, as a result, children make the most progress in communication, language and literacy and in personal, social and emotional development. This good progress is the result of good teaching, a rich curriculum and effective care, guidance and support for children and their parents. There is a good mix of teacher-led

and child-led activities, including early writing, that are supported by a wide range of resources. Staff keep a close eye on the children and carefully note their achievements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen the use of monitoring and data information to raise standards in writing.
- Make marking more consistent, so that pupils have a clear view of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

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	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

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	3
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	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

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

Inspection of Kearsley West Primary School, Kearsley, BL4 9BZ.

Thank you for the thoroughly enjoyable time I spent in your school this week. Your warm welcome, courtesy and help were much appreciated. The following are some of the main findings about your good school.

What I found particularly good about your school.

- The 2006 results in the tests, taken at the end of Year 2, were much better than in previous years.
- The above average results at the end of Year 6.
- The good progress you make throughout the school.
- Your good behaviour, attitudes to school and the improvement in attendance levels.
- The good teaching and learning that promote your good academic and personal development.
- The hard and willing work you do to help and care for each other and make a good contribution to the life of your school.
- The good range of activities that promote learning.
- The good leadership and management that is much appreciated by your parents.

To make your school even better, I think that your teachers could make further use of assessment and marking information to help you improve the quality and progress in writing. I know that you will want to play a full part by following your teachers' advice and guidance very closely.

Finally, I have suggested that all adults in school make the marking of your work more consistent so that you have an even clearer view of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further.

Very best wishes and good luck for the future.