

Lyndhurst Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105632
Local Authority	Oldham
Inspection number	308900
Inspection dates	22–23 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Julie Price Grimshaw

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	469
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Allison Brierley
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Feeley
Date of previous school inspection	10 November 2003
School address	Heron Street Oldham Lancashire OL8 4JD
Telephone number	0161 7701473
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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

Lyndhurst Primary is a much larger than average school serving a mixed intake, including some areas of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average, as is the number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is slightly higher than average. The school moved into new accommodation in September 2007.

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 has improved in most aspects of its work over recent years. Pupils develop into happy, confident individuals who have positive attitudes to learning. The majority of parents are very happy with the school's work, and particularly appreciate the 'brand new spacious building, providing a high quality, up-to-date learning environment for our children'. The school provides good value for money.

Pupils' achievement is good and standards are broadly in line with the national average. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are below typical expectations. Achievement and standards went through a period of decline after the last inspection, and data show that there was significant underachievement in 2004. From this point, the school has worked effectively to raise standards and improve pupils' achievement. There has been a steady upward trend in test results over the last few years. In 2007, pupils made good progress to reach standards at the end of Key Stage 2 that were slightly above the national average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and love the 'brilliant new building'. Attendance is in line with the national average and pupils are motivated by the rewards given for good attendance. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school, and pupils show a good deal of care for each other. They have an adequate understanding of healthy lifestyles, and particularly enjoy participating in the wide range of sporting activities on offer. Pupils respond particularly well to the opportunities to take on responsibilities; for example, some of the older pupils relish their roles as trained sports captains, which involves some excellent work with younger learners. Pupils feel safe around the school, and are totally confident that any rare instances of bullying are suitably dealt with by staff. They develop satisfactory basic skills, which means that they are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good, and leads to pupils making good progress. Positive relationships are a strong feature of all classroom work. A whole-school emphasis on developing the use of information and communication technology (ICT) has led to computers and interactive whiteboards being used well to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. However, in a few lessons teachers do not always explain tasks clearly; consequently, pupils do not understand what is expected of them. In such cases, this results in time being wasted and progress being slowed. Support staff make a very valuable contribution in their work with pupils with learning difficulties and, as a result, these pupils make consistently good progress. The school has recently focused on developing assessment and target-setting. Although this work is beginning to have a positive impact, good practice in setting targets is not consistently established across the school so that many pupils are not fully aware of what they need to do in order to improve. The good curriculum meets the needs of all and is currently being reviewed in order to develop better links between subjects and to increase opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills. Provision for pastoral care is good and the school works well with outside organisations in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management are good. Recent changes to the management structure have led to managers at all levels becoming more involved in evaluating the school's work, and all staff are now included in whole-school development planning. As a result, the school has made good progress since the last inspection and has good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

When children join the Nursery, many lack confidence in communication skills and have limited mathematical and social skills. During their time in Nursery and Reception, they make satisfactory progress, growing increasingly independent, and skilled in language and mathematics. However, most still enter Year 1 working at levels below those expected for their age. Those children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress alongside their peers, due to the support provided by highly skilled teaching assistants.

Leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The newly appointed coordinator has correctly identified current priorities for development, including the need to make good use of the spacious new indoor and outdoor environment. Staff are beginning to adapt the curriculum in order to make best use of the new environment. However, they do not always provide sufficient guidance to children to enable them to make good progress. Staff do not always ensure that their planning builds on assessment information in order to fully meet the needs of all children. The school is aware of this and is beginning to address this issue successfully.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers consistently explain tasks clearly so that pupils know exactly what they are expected to learn, particularly in the Foundation Stage.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' assessment and target-setting, so that all pupils are aware of what they need to do in order to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When children enter Year 1 their attainment is below national expectations, especially in writing, speaking and listening. They make good progress across Key Stages 1 and 2, to reach standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. Over the past three years there has been gradual improvement in achievement and standards, and in 2007 Year 6 pupils achieved the school's best results in the national tests. Pupils' performance in English has improved significantly and is better than in mathematics and science, although the writing skills of a small minority of pupils at both key stages remain a weakness. More than one third of pupils achieved the higher levels in English, mathematics and science in 2007. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress because their needs are identified and effective support is provided. Evidence indicates that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to meet the suitably challenging targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in their personal development, in particular their social skills. Pupils have a sound knowledge of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and the school has achieved the 'Activemark Gold' award. They appreciate the wide range of additional sporting activities available to them, both within and beyond the school day. They enjoy their learning and say that 'the teachers are really interested in what we have to say'. Behaviour is good; pupils show respect and care for one another, listening to others and contributing well to decision-making in the school. Attendance is satisfactory and the school works hard to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who have difficulties attending regularly or on time.

Pupils feel safe in school and are secure in the knowledge that 'there is always someone to talk to if you have a problem'. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is good overall. Their awareness of a variety of faiths and cultures is supported well through the school's work, including visits to theatres and museums. Money is raised for local and national charities using the children's ideas, which shows their awareness of the needs of others. Membership of the school council and the newly formed pupil learning team provides pupils with good opportunities to develop responsible attitudes in preparation for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All teachers establish good working relationships with pupils. Behaviour is well managed across the school, and rewards are used effectively to motivate pupils. ICT, including interactive whiteboard technology, is used well by teachers and pupils in order to enhance learning. In the best lessons, carefully chosen resources are used creatively to make learning lively and interesting. For example, in a lesson on writing 'spooky stories', the teacher used music and lighting very effectively to create a suitable atmosphere; pupils responded extremely well and produced impressive work.

In a minority of lessons, tasks are not explained clearly enough and this slows the pace of learning. Occasionally, pupils are not aware of teachers' expectations and are not given sufficient guidance in the classroom to ensure that they are able to get on with their learning at a brisk enough pace.

The contribution of support staff, including teaching assistants, is a strength of the school's work. They know their pupils well and show initiative in providing support at the right level for each individual. As a consequence, these pupils make good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well planned in order to meet pupils' needs, and takes account of new strategies and initiatives. The school has worked successfully to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across a range of subjects. The school has recently started to adopt a theme-based approach to curriculum planning, which has helped to motivate pupils, and there are plans to extend this approach across the school. Resources for ICT are very good and the new suite of laptop computers allows pupils to work individually. This enables teachers to support pupils effectively in the rapid development of ICT skills. However, as yet there is limited access to computers out of lesson times and this limits pupils' opportunities for research and similar work. There is a good range of extra-curricular opportunities including a variety of sporting and artistic activities. The curriculum is effectively enriched through visits to castles, farms and coastal landscapes for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and valued in the calm and well organised new school building. Vulnerable children, and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are very well supported by the learning mentor and the teaching assistants. All staff work well together to ensure that pupils'

pastoral needs are fully met, and this work is appreciated by pupils and parents alike. Arrangements for safeguarding children are in place and health and safety matters are dealt with effectively. The school is making progress in improving its assessment processes, but procedures for academic guidance are not applied consistently across the school. Most pupils are aware of whole class targets, but relatively few understand precisely what they need to do in order to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and his deputy work effectively together. Recently, the management structure of the school has been revised in order to delegate responsibilities to middle managers. All school managers are now involved in the monitoring and evaluation of a range of initiatives, and this is beginning to have a positive impact on the school's work. Information gathered by school managers is used well as part of the self-evaluation process and, as a result, the school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school has worked successfully in starting to involve all staff in setting priorities for future development, which has helped to establish a strong team approach to school improvement.

Governance has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory. Governors are strongly committed to their work. They have become more closely involved with the work of the school on a day-to-day basis, and are beginning to assist school leaders by a thorough discussion of issues related to school development.

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	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

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

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome in your school. We really enjoyed talking to you, hearing your views and watching you learn.

Lyndhurst is a good school that has improved in lots of ways over the past few years. You all told us that you think the new building is brilliant, and we agree with you. But other things have improved too, including the results in the tests taken by Year 6 pupils. This summer's results were the best ever, so the school is right to be very proud! We can see that you make good progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

We were impressed with your behaviour and also that you had such sensible attitudes to your work. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, and that you feel safe and well-cared for. It was great to hear you talk about how you love to take on responsibilities, and we thought that the sports captains did some excellent work with younger pupils. You obviously enjoy the after-school activities that the school provides.

You told us that your teachers work hard and that most of your lessons are really good. We agree that your teachers and all the support staff work well and help you to make good progress. We noticed that, in a few lessons, some of you didn't quite understand what you had been asked to do. We have suggested that the staff always try to make sure that tasks are explained thoroughly to you so that you can all get on with your work quickly. The youngest children in the school enjoy their work and play, but we think that they would make better progress with a little more guidance from the staff. Most of you knew about your class targets, but not everyone knew exactly what they needed to do to improve their work. We think that you would learn even better if you had more help with this, so this is another one of our suggestions to the school.

You have an important part to play, too! You can help by always listening carefully to your teachers' instructions, and letting them know if you're not sure about anything. You should also make sure that you know what you need to do next to improve your work. If you are not sure, you know that you can always ask for help - especially as you've told us that your teachers are caring and ready to listen to what you have to say.

We are delighted that so many of you are proud to be pupils at Lyndhurst, and wish you well in the future.