

Lower Kersal Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105886
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	308973
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	196
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr E Barnett
Headteacher	Mrs A Shanley
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	St Aidan's Grove Salford Lancashire M7 3TN
Telephone number	0161 7922726
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an urban area of social and economic disadvantage in Salford. A refurbishment programme is due to begin in 2008 to improve the accommodation. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The proportion of pupils who join and leave the school other than at the usual times of year is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is broadly average. Although most pupils are from White British backgrounds, the school population has recently started to include a small but increasing number of pupils newly arrived in this country from the African sub-continent and from Eastern Europe.

The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Active Mark and the Healthy Schools' Award.

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. It provides good value for money. In spite of the building's shortcomings, a bright and welcoming learning environment has been created. Pupils, parents, staff and governors identify strongly with the school, are proud of its achievements and ambitious for future improvement.

Pupils' personal development is good. Their welfare is promoted well and they are given excellent care and support. This enables them to be secure and happy in school and to approach learning with positive attitudes. The school has very good relationships with parents, and they express high levels of appreciation. The way in which the school values each individual helps vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. The school has responded well to the recent need to develop expertise in providing for pupils who are new to the country. These pupils and their families are given a warm welcome; they make good progress in learning English and quickly become part of the school community. Pupils have a good awareness of issues around healthy living and personal safety. School councillors are proud of their role in decision making. Pupils are proud of their school and are well motivated.

Achievement is good overall. Children start in the Nursery with skills that are below those expected for their age and reach standards that are close to national averages by the end of Key Stage 2. An initiative designed to improve pupils' writing skills in Key Stage 1 resulted in a significant rise in standards in 2007, with reading also starting to show improvement. Standards in English also improved at Key Stage 2 and are now broadly average at both key stages. Standards in science are close to average. Although standards in mathematics remain below those in English and science, they are improving. The school has begun to improve the challenge and support it provides for its more able pupils. Although the proportions reaching higher levels in national tests have begun to rise, these pupils are not yet achieving as well as they should.

Good teaching and a well planned curriculum combine to ensure that pupils learn well in most classes. In spite of accommodation restrictions, work has begun to develop the curriculum in Year 1. However, it does not yet meet the learning needs of all the pupils in Year 1 because it is not linked sufficiently closely to type of activities provided in the Foundation Stage.

Assessment and monitoring and evaluation procedures are rigorous and school leaders are using the information gained from these effectively to help them to plan improvements. Individual learning targets are being used to good effect and pupils know their targets and understand why they are important.

The school has taken effective steps to promote improvement since the last inspection. The good quality of provision and effective leadership and management give the school good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Many children join the Foundation Stage with speaking and listening skills that are considerably lower than expected for their age. The well led staff team works closely to provide a warm, stimulating environment, so children feel safe and secure. This enables them to settle quickly into their new surroundings and make good progress in their personal development, establishing positive attitudes to learning. They soon learn to share, take turns and become more independent when choosing activities. Good teaching in the Foundation Stage is based on an understanding

of children's learning needs and on effective planning and assessment. Children are keen to investigate the broad range of practical learning activities. Although most activities provide opportunities for children to learn at their own pace, sometimes Reception children spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to adults and so occasionally they become restless. Parents are welcomed and there is good attendance at parent workshops. Progress is carefully monitored, enabling staff to act quickly to provide extra help and support when needed. Children make good progress in relation to their starting points but standards at the start of Year 1 are still below average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide greater challenge for the more able pupils so that they achieve as well as they should.
- Develop curriculum links between the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 in order more fully to meet the learning needs of all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

There were some significant improvements in standards in 2007, especially in English. Standards in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 are now broadly average after the school's intense focus on developing literacy skills. Similarly, standards in English at Key Stage 2 have now also risen to broadly average levels. Standards in mathematics are below average, although improving. In both key stages, some of the more able pupils are not yet achieving as they should. Although this picture is improving as the result of work to accelerate the progress of the more able, work remains to be done to ensure that these pupils achieve as well as they should. Through skilled support, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of learning to speak English make good progress, in relation to their abilities and starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. The school successfully promotes tolerance and understanding between pupils from different cultures and backgrounds. They respect each others' beliefs and cultures and enjoy celebrating different festivals. Pupils have a good understanding of how to be healthy. Behaviour is good. Parents comment on how the school has helped their children to show respect for others. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They know how to deal with any problems, saying, 'You should walk away.' They use the buddy bench if they need someone to play with. Parents say any issues are quickly sorted out. Pupils become sensible members of the school community, eager to help others through charity fundraising. School councillors are proud of their work because they know their ideas are listened to and acted on. Suitable academic skills, including those of information and communication technology (ICT), prepare pupils satisfactorily for their economic future. Attendance has improved but remains below average despite the school's best efforts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching, with some examples of outstanding practice, enables pupils to make good progress overall. Pupils enjoy their lessons. This is because lesson plans take into account their

wide range of learning needs and because the activities provided are varied, interesting and relevant. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and pupils are given good personal support and encouragement in class. Progress is assessed carefully and the information gained is used in planning. In a small proportion of lessons, the pace of learning is reduced when pupils are kept sitting for too long on the carpet. Pupils are encouraged to collaborate with partners and in teams to solve problems and share ideas. This promotes their confidence as learners. They are developing mature attitudes; this is exemplified in some classes where pupils are learning to assess their own and each other's work very effectively. Teaching assistants work effectively to provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who are learning English as an additional language and this is a key factor in ensuring progress. Good teamwork between class teachers and teaching assistants contributes well to effective teaching and learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is largely matched well to pupils' interests and learning needs, and provides a good range of activities. This helps to ensure that pupils work hard and achieve well. In Year 1, where there are accommodation restrictions, the curriculum is being developed to more fully match pupils' learning needs. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are taught across other subject areas, for example in writing reports in science or a diary in history, enabling pupils to practise and improve their skills. A good programme for personal, health, social and emotional education gives good opportunities to reflect on their own and others' feelings. The curriculum is enriched by specialist teaching in music, sports and ICT. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' cultural development and their enjoyment of learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides excellent pastoral care for its pupils. Staff use their good knowledge of the community very effectively, reaching out to families to provide sensitive support and high levels of care. This includes providing courses designed to help parents support their children's learning at home. Very good relationships ensure that parents feel able to approach the school, confident they will be welcomed as partners in the learning process. The school works well with external agencies to support pupils with social, emotional and learning needs. Those pupils with LDD and pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English are well provided for and given good care and guidance, resulting in good progress. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all current requirements. Good systems to track and monitor progress enable the school to detect underachievement and to direct extra help to pupils who need it. Pupils know their targets and why they are important, but the more able pupils are not yet challenged sufficiently to reach the levels of which they are capable. Although marking is good in some classes, its quality is inconsistent, as it does not always link to the lesson's learning objectives or show pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. Clear vision for school improvement is shared wholeheartedly by the school community. Middle managers play an active and

important role in assuring the quality of provision across the school. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are rigorous and the information from monitoring feeds into action plans. As a result, standards in English and mathematics have begun to rise, although further work remains to be done to ensure that the more able children make the best possible progress in all areas of the curriculum. School leaders carry out detailed and rigorous analysis of progress towards the challenging targets they set for the school. As a result, and because they know their school well, their self-evaluation is largely accurate. Supportive governors are starting to develop their ability to hold the school to account and to act as critical friends. Provision for pupils who have additional learning needs is well led and managed and this contributes to their good progress.

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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?	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	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

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

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We really enjoyed meeting you and finding out about all the good things that happen at your school.

Lower Kersal is a good school. We were pleased to see that it is a happy and successful place. It was good to see how well you all get on with each other and we think that the school takes excellent care of you. Your behaviour is good and you work hard in your lessons. We think that you are taught well and that the lessons are interesting and well planned to help you to do well. Because of all these good factors, standards are rising at your school, especially in English. This is something to be proud of, so keep on trying your best so that standards continue to rise!

We were also pleased to see that attendance has improved - well done to those of you who have helped with that. We hope that the small number of children who don't always come to school regularly will try hard to improve as well, so that they don't miss out on any of the good things that go on at Lower Kersal.

We've asked the headteacher and the staff to help the quicker learners to do as well as possible in their work. They've already started to think about this, as some of you may know. We've also asked them to find ways of giving the pupils in Year 1 a wider range of learning activities, to help them to make faster progress in their learning.

With our very best wishes for the future.