

Ashton West End Primary School, Early Years Centre and Visually Impaired Resource Base

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106202
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	309050
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Bernard Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	306
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Mollie Sayer
Headteacher	Mr Micah Cummings
Date of previous school inspection	23 May 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	William Street Ashton-under-Lyne Lancashire OL7 0BJ
Telephone number	0161 330 4234
Fax number	0161 339 9382

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school set in an area of challenging social circumstances. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the usual times is higher than normally seen. The proportion of pupils in the school who are from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. The school is currently working towards the Healthy Schools Award. The school's title incorporating the description 'Visual Impaired Resource Base' is a vestige of the past and no longer has a relevance to its role.

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 satisfactory school and it provides satisfactory value for money. Pupils' personal development is good and reflects the way the school develops pupils' sense of responsibility so that by Year 6 they are mature young people ready to move on to secondary education. Behaviour is good and pupils have a very positive approach to others. Pupils receive good pastoral care so that they enjoy coming to school. Parents are satisfied with the support the school offers them and their children. This is reflected in the satisfactory attendance levels, achieved in the face of the school's difficulties in persuading some parents of the importance of regular and unbroken attendance.

Standards are well below average at the end of Year 6. Most children enter the Nursery with levels of skills that are well below expectations. Achievement throughout the school is satisfactory. Much work has recently been done to improve writing and to good effect in improving spelling and punctuation across the school. However, standards in literacy are still too low because pupils' ability to plan and structure writing of different kinds remains weak. Standards in mathematics are too low because pupils' abilities to use and apply numbers and to calculate accurately are not developed well enough.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Pupils' progress is checked and recorded carefully and challenging targets are mostly met. Teachers' use of assessment to check and record progress is having an impact in identifying any pupils who are not doing as well as they should so that their progress can be boosted. Teachers manage their classes well. Pupils like their teachers, are keen to please and show positive attitudes to their work. Teachers' planning is sound overall and they use marking effectively to encourage pupils towards their best efforts.

The curriculum is good and is extended and enhanced by a variety of extra-curricular activities, including good use of visitors to school and visits out of school. As a result, pupils are interested in their work and enjoy their schooling. Good links with local schools and the community further enrich the curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties in literacy and those who speak English as an additional language benefit from the good quality support they receive. Pupils make informed choices about safe and healthy lifestyles.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and have ensured mainly good provision and satisfactory achievement. Self-evaluation is realistic and accurate. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development, where raising achievement is at the centre of planning. A positive and inclusive approach ensures that all staff are keen to raise standards. However, some teachers with responsibilities for leading subjects do not have the leadership skills needed for their roles in order to have a positive impact on standards.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good provision in the well-led EYFS enables children to make a good start to their education and to become happy and receptive learners. On entry to the Nursery, standards are very low. Overall, standards at the end of Reception are below expected levels for the age group. This reflects children's good progress. Daily sessions focusing on letters and sounds have been introduced this year and are helping to boost literacy skills, although it is too soon to measure the full impact of this initiative on standards. Further work to use outside agencies to confirm staff judgements is planned in order to improve the EYFS team's awareness of the use of

assessment. The quality of teaching is good. The curriculum is planned well, and uses the good outdoor area effectively to promote children's development of skills across all the areas of learning. Activities, both indoors and outside, are well matched to children's needs. They provide fun and interest and give good opportunities for children to initiate their own play as well as take part in adult-led activities. For example, a small group of children took part in a role play based on a doctor's surgery, acting out the parts of doctor and patient, which provided a rich seam for language development. The children interact well with each other and enjoy warm relationships with the caring staff. Vulnerable children and those who are learning English as an additional language are supported well. Positive relationships between the school and parents are established and parents are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in literacy, paying particular attention to the way pupils plan and structure different kinds of writing.
- Improve pupils' ability to use and apply numbers and calculate accurately to raise standards in mathematics
- Develop the leadership skills of those with responsibility for planning and leading subjects across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools where 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

Standards at the end of Year 6 are well below average. This reflects satisfactory achievement because, up to this year, pupils have entered Year 1 with well below average standards. Pupils' levels of attainment at the end of Year 2 are similarly low, but pupils reach their targets and make sound progress. During Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate the gains made in the EYFS, particularly in their language skills. This is especially the case among the high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language. Standards are affected by the relatively high numbers of pupils joining the school later than usual and the larger proportions of such pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils' skills in some aspects of mathematics and writing are underdeveloped and their progress in these areas is too slow. Approaches to teaching have in the past not tackled these problems adequately and the school is now making the teaching of basic skills more meaningful and appropriate. Reading skills are also well below average, but action to use phonics more effectively is improving standards. The school ensures satisfactory achievement among pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the larger than average number of pupils who join the school at other than the usual times. Pupils for whom English is not their first language and who have been at the school from their earliest years benefit from additional support. Many of these pupils make better progress than their peers. Higher attaining pupils make at least satisfactory progress and some are achieving well in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. This is reflected in their good behaviour. Assemblies offer

time for reflection and pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. They learn well about life in other societies and value and recognise a variety of faiths and cultures. The Pupils themselves declare with great glee that they celebrate both Eid and Christmas. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and to exercise and they recount how much they enjoy taking part in the many sporting opportunities on offer. They feel safe in their school, which they enjoy attending and speak about with pride. The school functions well as a community. Relationships are good. Pupils show respect for each other and for the adults who care for them. They are polite, well mannered and keen to learn. They trust the staff and are ready to turn to them with confidence, should the need arise. Pupils relish the many responsibilities they are given. Attendance is satisfactory because the school has gone to great lengths to reduce absence, particularly among families who take time off during term time. The school works hard to help pupils improve their progress in basic skills and prepare for life and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with some that is good. In the best lessons there is a good pace, with questioning techniques that make pupils think. Here, pupils show independence, enjoyment and a desire to further their learning. However, this is not the case in all lessons. Some, while satisfactory overall, lack pace and teachers' questioning does not consistently challenge pupils enough. Teachers' planning is conscientious and ensures tasks that suit the different abilities of pupils. Some teachers offer pupils the benefit of being able to talk about their work with their peers and to set themselves a challenge. However, too often there are few opportunities for pupils to benefit from supportive spoken language work. Marking is undertaken conscientiously. Teaching assistants are clear about what is expected from them and perform a valuable role, particularly in supporting the lowest attainers in their literacy and numeracy work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has recently revised its ways of teaching English, mathematics and science in order to give pupils more relevant and meaningful learning opportunities. For example, pupils have become pen friends with street children in Goa in an attempt to make structured writing more purposeful. This initiative is tackling a weakness that held back pupils' progress, but its impact has yet to be assessed. Access to all other subjects is through a wide range of activities, which pupils very much enjoy. Recently, for example, they took part in an art day led by a potter and a local artist and gained a great deal from the interest engendered. Additionally, many musical opportunities are provided about which pupils speak with pride. Sport is also popular and the school has a high sporting profile in the local community. Pupils take part in a wide range of visits that contribute much to their personal development; Years 5 and 6 are currently anticipating with huge excitement their forthcoming residential visit. Pupils also benefit from the well planned use of visitors who extend and enhance their experiences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This is a very caring school that values each individual and is much appreciated by parents. The pastoral care for pupils is a strength. Child protection and risk assessment procedures are in place. The school works effectively to care for all its pupils, partly through the good links established with outside support agencies. Teachers and their assistants are effective and their cooperation and planning have a strong impact in supporting all pupils. This includes the high proportion who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who are new to the country. This good quality pastoral support enables these pupils to make sound progress. Academic support and guidance are effective. The systems for assessing and carefully tracking pupils' achievement allow staff to intervene swiftly and effectively if progress slows.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher makes a good contribution in placing the school at the heart of the community and ensuring a clear direction to the school's development. The recently improved provision for the EYFS and the good progress made by children are testament to his influence. Satisfactory systems are in place to ensure that self-evaluation is based on accurate data. Targets for improvement at all levels are increasingly challenging and are largely met. The systems in place to monitor standards and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. This ensures a common purpose among staff to raise standards further. The response made to the last inspection report has been positive and the school shows satisfactory capacity to improve further. The curriculum is used to teach pupils the importance of tolerance and understanding between different ethnic groups, cultures and religions. This has a clear influence, seen in the harmonious relationships between pupils. Senior and middle managers have developed their roles well in literacy and science, but in other areas subject leaders do not make enough impact on standards and achievement. There are good partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to support the school's work. Governors fulfil their responsibilities satisfactorily. They are sufficiently well informed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are prepared to challenge the senior management as well as support the school.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 learners' needs?	3
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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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 Ashton West End Primary School, Early Years Centre and Visually Impaired Resource Base, Ashton-under-Lyne, OL7 0BJ

Thank you all for the welcome you gave me and my colleagues when we visited your school. Please thank your parents and carers for all their letters and for taking the time to talk to us.

I judge your school to be satisfactory overall and good in the way in which it helps to look after you and guide your personal development. You told me that you like your teachers and the way they take good care of you and teach you to be safe and healthy. I enjoyed the enthusiasm you show for staying healthy and fit. I was impressed by your good behaviour in class and the way you all get on so well together during lunchtimes and play times. You obviously take your responsibilities seriously, for example in the way you run your school council and perform your duties as monitors. You all make satisfactory progress as a result of the sound teaching you receive. I enjoyed coming to your lessons, reading your work and talking to you. You were all very helpful and friendly. I would like to compliment you on the way you help to look after your school and the pride you take in the displays in classrooms. All these things help you to develop into mature young people, who get on well and consider others.

To make things even better, I have asked that teachers help all of you to improve your literacy skills, particularly in the way you plan your writing. I have also asked them to help you do better in mathematics by helping you to improve your calculation skills and your ability to use numbers.

I have also asked that some of your teachers are given more help to develop the subjects they are responsible for so that you make better progress in other subjects.