

Ling Bob Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107497
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	309411
Inspection dates	28–29 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Carmen Markham

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	383
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Bousfield
Headteacher	Mrs R Solan
Date of previous school inspection	10 January 2005
School address	Albert Road Pellon Halifax West Yorkshire HX2 0QD
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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

This large primary school draws pupils from an area of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. More than a third of pupils join the school part way through their primary school education. Most pupils are of White British heritage but there is an increasing range of multi-ethnic backgrounds reflecting changes in the locality. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is significantly below the national average but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has a provision for visually impaired pupils. It has a very large Nursery that serves the local community. Only half the pupils from the Nursery attend the main school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Ling Bob is a good school with some outstanding features. It has significant strengths in its provision for the personal development of pupils and provides outstanding care, guidance and support so pupils enjoy their education and are ready to learn.

The leadership and management of the school are good. They ensure that pupils make good progress and that they get the most out of school. However, this does not tell the full story of the very special ethos and a school environment that is bursting with exciting activities, out-of-school clubs and wonderful displays of pupils' work. The many improvements made by the school are attributable to the energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher, her capable leadership team and good governance. They are inspired by their vision of a school as a safe and happy community where all can achieve. The leadership team knows the school's strengths and weaknesses well and develops good strategies to address identified areas for development. It has high expectations, works closely with the local community and parents and constantly strives for the best for its pupils. The budget is well managed and the school provides good value for money. It has good capacity to improve.

Pupils throughout the school achieve well from their exceptionally low starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards are a little below average in English and science and are well below average in mathematics. Those pupils who are in school from Nursery to Year 6 close the gap between the standards they achieve and those expected nationally because they benefit from continuity in their education and good provision. However, typically, almost half the pupils in the current Year 6 have joined the school midway between Nursery and Year 6 and the gap is too large for them to close, particularly if they have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school meets the needs of all its pupils well. Pupils with visual impairments are well integrated into the life of the school, as discrete provision supports the development of life skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language are also very well supported and make good progress. Able pupils attain the higher levels.

The quality of teaching is good. Skilled teachers plan lessons thoroughly to ensure that all pupils' needs are met. Teachers work very effectively with high quality teaching assistants, a range of good resources and a good curriculum to involve pupils in their learning and to help them to progress. Assessment, target setting and the monitoring of pupils' progress are all done well and pupils know what they need to do to make progress. Excellent additional support is provided for pupils who need it. Typically, a parent wrote, 'Not only does the school support children who are finding learning difficult but also those who need pushing at the higher end of the class.'

The personal development of pupils is good and they behave well. Pupils grow quickly in maturity as staff make demands of them to promote their independence from the Foundation Stage onwards. By Year 6, they are effective members of the school community and the wider world beyond school because their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Good relationships cement the harmonious atmosphere that permeates the school. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and increasingly make informed choices about their health and behaviour.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Nursery make good progress from their exceptionally low starting points although progress is slower in speaking and listening, and mathematical development. This is because many children have had very little experience of these aspects prior to starting school. On entry to Reception they continue to demonstrate skills that are well below those expected for children of their age. However, they make good progress, particularly in number work and personal development, and by the end of Reception three quarters are working within expected levels in most areas of learning although communication, language and literacy and aspects of their mathematical development are significantly lower. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress as they are extremely well supported. The Foundation Stage is well organised, planning is thorough and the assessment and tracking of children's progress is exemplary. Staff use detailed analysis of the progress of each child to plan lessons to meet the needs of all children. Parents are well informed about how they can help their children to learn and transition arrangements are very good. The learning environment is stimulating, well planned and enables children to learn in a safe and harmonious environment. The outside play area works well during fine weather but is less successful at other times when it cannot be used effectively owing to the absence of free-standing equipment and a covered area. This has an adverse impact on their physical development and the application of skills that they have learned in the classroom.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics, throughout the school.
- Improve provision for outdoor play in the Foundation Stage so as to ensure the full delivery of the curriculum and the development of children's skills.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start Year 1 with standards in literacy and numeracy that are well below average. By Year 6, standards are little below average in English and science but lower in mathematics, when compared to national averages. Mathematics is the weakest subject in both key stages. However, pupils make good progress in relation to their very low starting points. The rate of progress is increasing as pupils move through the school. Those pupils who remain at the school for their primary education make as much progress as their peers nationally. Current data and pupils' work indicate that standards are rising in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2. Able pupils achieve the higher levels expected of them, an indication that pupils are challenged to reach their potential. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. This is because their individual needs are promptly assessed and the right level of support is provided in lessons to ensure that they make measurable advances in their learning. However, well over a third of pupils arrive in school between Nursery and Year 6; these pupils do not make as much progress as those who spend their entire primary education at the school because they have not had the benefit of the school's good provision for all this period.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and typically say, 'Our lessons are really good and the school clubs are fabulous.' Although pupils enjoy and value school, attendance is a little below average as, despite the school's best efforts, some parents take children on extended holidays or do not ensure that they attend regularly. Pupils behave well and are quiet and polite around school. Pupils know how to manage anger and attempt to practise some of the strategies they have been taught to use when they need to. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. Pupils respond very positively to the strong moral messages in assembly, behave with consideration to others during the school day and respond very positively to the school's high quality multicultural provision. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities such as becoming 'befrienders' or play leaders and representing their class on the school and eco councils. They are also encouraged to save money for school trips, raise money for school activities and contribute to the school newsletter. They are aware of the needs of others and readily contribute to fundraising and to charities, for example through the shoe box appeal. The choir gives a civic performance each year. Pupils know how to stay healthy and readily make healthy choices.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well, do their best and respond to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. 'Teachers make the lessons interesting and help us all they can,' said one pupil, capturing the views of others. Teachers are skilful at encouraging pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills with good use of 'talking partners' to keep all pupils thinking and involved. The good use of the speaking and listening corner in all classrooms also contributes well to the development of these skills. Learning is based on thorough and accurate assessments which, coupled with careful marking, help pupils know how to improve their work. In the best lessons pupils are very independent learners, the pace of the lesson is fast and the teacher is extremely skilful at managing a range of needs so that pupils make good progress. In a few lessons the pace of learning is slower although pupils are still encouraged to be independent learners. Very good support is provided for the high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the visual impairment unit and those who speak English as an additional language, often through the effective work of the teaching assistants. This ensures that these pupils make the same good progress as their classmates.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is successful in meeting the needs of pupils, providing well for literacy and information and communication technology (ICT), where pupils make good progress. There have also been recent improvements in provision for mathematics but these have not had sufficient time to improve standards. Pupils are given good opportunities to learn how to stay safe and healthy. Excellent displays around the school celebrate pupils' successes and show the breadth of the curriculum, including multicultural education. An imaginative new set of creative topics, such as the Arctic and Antarctic, and moving toys, has been introduced. These enhance learning by making meaningful links between subjects. Opportunities for enrichment

are good and provide for as many different interests as possible. They include a good range of visitors and visits, including a residential outdoor pursuit experience for pupils at the start of Year 6. A varied programme of learning activities, holiday schemes and as many as 33 different before- and after-school clubs on offer in any one week all add to pupils' enjoyment of school. These are well attended and many parents commented on the good quality of this provision.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's provision to support pupils' personal development is very strong. Stunning displays of pupils' work confirm the outstanding provision and demonstrate the school's good involvement with the community. Pupils value constructive marking and interviews with teachers and parents on how to improve their progress and meet their targets. An excellent system tracks the progress of all pupils very carefully and regular reviews are held to identify pupils in need of extra support. Parents are fully involved in this process. Pupils are very well cared for. Learning mentors work hard to ensure that they attend school and are punctual. They work very closely with parents to improve attendance. Outside agencies are quickly involved to support pupils where there is a need. Pupils and the school benefit from the help provided by the local learning support unit. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. They have full access to the curriculum. Child protection procedures are very well established and safeguarding procedures strong. Health and safety arrangements, including risk assessments, are good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management team and governors work as a united team to ensure good quality provision, good achievement and firm foundations for pupils for their future lives. They ensure that all aspects of the school are monitored and evaluated effectively and that all staff are held accountable for their work. The headteacher is very aware of all aspects of the school's work and this helps the leadership team and governors to be constantly aware of strengths and areas for development. The school's evaluation of itself is accurate although a little modest in relation to care, guidance and support, which it judged to be good. Appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and a full range of strategies has been effectively implemented. This has successfully led to improvements in all aspects of the school's work except mathematics, where it is too early to see the impact of initiatives to improve standards. Careful consideration is given to staff appointments and sometimes innovative solutions, like a bursar shared with other schools, have proved to be very successful. The school's finances are managed very effectively and ensure that the school is well resourced.

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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?	1
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	1
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?	1

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	2
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

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite and helped us to find our way around. We admired the beautiful displays of your work, particularly the displays in the hall about all the books you read for multicultural book week. We also enjoyed talking to you and finding out about your school and eco councils and the work you do in lessons.

We think that your headteacher and the staff all work hard to make your school successful. We judge it to be a good school with some things that are outstanding. The staff look after you very well and you feel safe and happy in school. You make progress in lessons because your teachers plan them carefully so you have work that suits you. They also make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting topics, activities and visits so that you can practise new skills and improve your understanding of the world.

Most of you attend school regularly and arrive on time. You behave well and so you are able to listen and learn. We noticed that you take good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. You also know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides before and after school.

One of the reasons for our visit was to see how your school can improve. Although most of you are making good progress we think this could be even better, so we have asked your school to help you to raise your standards, particularly in mathematics. We have also asked for the school to improve the outdoor play area in the Nursery and Reception classes as it cannot be used in poor weather and outdoor play is very important in developing the new skills that small children learn in the classroom.