

Feniscowles Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119163
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313204
Inspection date	18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Kathleen McArthur

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	403
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Shaw
Headteacher	Miss Elizabeth Hargreaves
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2005
School address	Livesey Branch Road Feniscowles Blackburn Lancashire BB2 5EG
Telephone number	01254 201054
Fax number	01254 200293

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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: the school's actions to raise standards in writing, how well pupils are challenged and how pupils are involved in the assessment of their learning.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data, lesson observations and pupils' books. Discussions were held with staff, pupils and governors, and parents' questionnaires were scrutinised. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average school is situated on the outskirts of Blackburn in an area of relatively favourable social and economic circumstances. Nearly half of the pupils travel to the school from outside the immediate vicinity including less affluent areas, resulting in a broad social mix. Most pupils are of White British heritage and a very small minority speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils entitled to a free school meal and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are lower than average. The two school buildings are separated by a busy main road. The school holds the Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Feniscowles Primary is a good school with outstanding features. Inspection findings confirm the school's accurate self-evaluation. Dedicated leadership by the headteacher, fully supported by the skilled deputy, staff and governors has created a strong, effective team and successfully implemented the school motto, 'TEAM; together everyone achieves more'.

The school's good reputation attracts pupils from a wide area. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. Good partnerships exist between home and school and there is a flourishing Parent Teacher Association. Many parents commented that their children were very happy and praised the headteacher and staff for always being helpful, approachable and willing to listen. There has been good improvement overall since the previous inspection. Problem solving skills in mathematics have improved and provision for and the use of information communications technology (ICT) has been enhanced. Rigorous actions to raise standards in writing are making an impact in Key Stage 1, but progress is slower in Key Stage 2.

Achievement is good. Children start school with attainment below that typical for their age, especially in communication and language skills. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage and reach the goals expected for their age. Progress is good through Key Stage 1 and standards are above average. Teacher assessments in 2007 show pupils did particularly well in mathematics and writing. Pupils continue to progress well in Key Stage 2 and reach above average standards. Results of the 2007 national tests showed in science standards at the higher level were significantly above average. In English, although 93% of pupils reached the expected level in reading, only about half reached the expected level in writing. Actions to remedy this include structured opportunities to plan and write at length and 'Talking homework'; topics to discuss at home with parents to help them organise thoughts and ideas prior to writing. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were full of praise for the help they and their children receive. Good support and guidance for pupils' individual needs ensures they achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Personal development including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Excellent equality of opportunity ensures every pupil is fully included, valued and respected. Consequently, they behave really well, are very polite, cooperative, friendly and mature into caring, sensible young people. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy, feel very safe in school and trust the staff, saying any problems are sorted out straight away. They are keen to help others and are more than willing to accept responsibilities. Pupils' contribution to the community is first rate; they are reliable play leaders, school councillors and enthusiastic Eco-Warriors. Good academic and excellent personal and social skills prepare pupils well for their educational and economic future.

Good teaching provides lessons that successfully challenge all learners so they achieve well. High quality relationships add to pupils' enjoyment; they say lessons are fun but know they are expected to work hard. The good curriculum links subjects creatively, covers basic subjects and ICT well and provides a good programme for personal development. Enrichment is excellent. Pupils and parents value the many special days and themed weeks. During the 'Healthy Me week' pupils sampled fruit smoothies and created photo posters to illustrate healthy and unhealthy lifestyles. Many activities, including samba drumming taught by the music specialist and events arranged through the local schools network broaden pupils' experiences and cultural

development most effectively. Sports clubs and music are popular and older pupils recently participated in challenging outdoor activities during an exciting residential visit.

Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute strongly to pupils' well-being so they achieve well academically and socially. Safeguarding arrangements meet all current requirements. Very good assessment systems monitor progress rigorously so staff quickly spot any underachievement and direct help where needed. In writing, pupils have clear success criteria and use a colour code to self-evaluate and check how well they are doing. This has given pupils greater responsibility for their progress in writing but has not yet been extended to other subjects.

The headteacher's strong commitment and vision for improvement inspires all aspects of the school's work. Effective performance management systems and in-service training closely link priorities in the school development plan and outcomes from rigorous analysis of results. Governance is good. Active involvement in the life of the school gives governors secure knowledge from which to challenge and support. The budget is carefully directed to raise standards, promote pupils' welfare and to refurbish the oldest parts of the building. Value for money is good and there is good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and ensures that provision is good. The children come from a variety of pre-school settings and start school with skills below those usually seen, especially in the vital areas of communication and language. Good induction arrangements ensure children quickly feel secure and happy in school, ready to investigate the rich range of activities available to them. Good teaching, firmly based on a well planned curriculum provides an appropriate blend of adult and child led activities. The attractive outdoor area is well resourced to extend learning but opportunities to use this facility are overly dependent on good weather. Careful monitoring of progress and activities closely matched to individual needs ensures children make good progress in all areas of learning. By the end of their Reception year, most children reach, and some exceed the levels usually seen at their age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing for older pupils.
- Extend the use of self-evaluation to give pupils increasing involvement and responsibility for their own learning.

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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?	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	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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	1
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

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Feniscowles Primary School, Blackburn, BB2 5EG

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed my day because you were all very polite, friendly and helpful. You told me how much you enjoy school and everything you do. Your parents are very pleased with the school because you are happy and achieve well. Everyone seemed to enjoy the 'Healthy Me' week, especially tasting the different fruit smoothies and Year 6 were dressing up to be photographed to show what happens if you do not live a healthy lifestyle!

I promised I would write a letter telling you what I found.

Feniscowles is a good school that is led well by your headteacher. The staff and governors are a good team and make sure the school meets all your needs. Your personal and social development is excellent. You behave very well, really enjoy school and feel safe and secure. I was very impressed with all the jobs you do to help the school and the community. Your school makes sure you have many skills that prepare you well for the future.

Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. You told me your teachers make lessons fun and expect you to work hard. You are taught well and I know you work hard because you reach standards that are higher than most children of your age. Well done! Older children now need to do better in writing; I have asked the teachers to help them do this. I know you enjoy the 'Big Write' and your parents help with your 'Talking homework'. You have a lot of exciting extra activities, including trips and playing the drums. The staff look after you really well and keep a very close eye on your progress. You check your writing using the colour system and success criteria. I have asked the teachers to extend this system because I think you could do this in mathematics and science as well, so you know how to improve even more of your work.

Thank you again for all your help.

I send my very best wishes to you all

Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector