

Sabden Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119165
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313205
Inspection dates	6–7 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Chris Penter

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	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Glenn
Headteacher	Mrs Sandra Dundon
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Whalley Road Sabden Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 9DZ
Telephone number	01282 771000
Fax number	01282 775896

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Sabden Primary School has fewer pupils than the average primary school. The school serves the village of Sabden and the surrounding communities in an area which has lower levels of deprivation than those found nationally. Almost all pupils are White British and none is at an early stage of learning English. Very few pupils are eligible to claim free school meals. A very small proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and no pupil has a statement of special educational need. Children in the Reception year are often taught with those from the Nursery and thereafter pupils are taught in three classes, each containing two year groups of pupils. The school has Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. The school judges its effectiveness to be outstanding. Inspection findings do not support this judgement because pupils' achievement is inadequate.

Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities that are above and in some cases well above those that are typical for their age. Achievement is unsatisfactory overall and by the time they reach Year 6, standards are average. The 2007 national test results at the end of Year 6 were broadly average overall. The weakest results were in English and the strongest in mathematics. The results reflect a steady decline in standards over the past four years.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. This is because lessons are poorly planned and fail to address the learning needs of individuals or groups in mixed-age classes. As a result, the pupils are not challenged and few make the progress of which they are capable. Assessment is underdeveloped with the consequence that pupils are not clear about what they have achieved or what they need to do to improve. Because assessment is not effective, teachers are not clear about how to plan to meet the needs of each pupil.

The headteacher and her staff have succeeded in creating a bright and welcoming school in which all staff are committed to providing a high level of care. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and they attend regularly, exhibiting good behaviour and showing positive attitudes to learning. Most parents are very positive about the school. One described it as 'a wonderful, nurturing school' whilst another felt it was 'a focal point of the village'. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They exhibit high self-esteem and communicate and cooperate well with each other and with adults. Pupils have the attitudes, knowledge and skills to become successful future learners, but they should be so much further on in their learning in preparation for the next stage of their education.

The curriculum is inadequate. It meets all statutory requirements and places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy but less so on information and communication technology (ICT). However, the curriculum is not planned or organised well enough to cater for the needs of pupils' different abilities. Pupils benefit from the many good opportunities to engage in enrichment activities such as Spanish, dance and drama, and all pupils have the opportunity to play a musical instrument.

Leadership and management of the school are inadequate because there is not enough recognition that the pupils should reach much higher standards. The school does not monitor or evaluate its work effectively because there are too few mechanisms to check the impact regularly of what is provided. As a result, plans for improvement do not build upon the school's strengths or tackle the areas for development. The governing body is very supportive but is not active in challenging the school about its performance or in monitoring and evaluating its work. The school does not demonstrate that it has the capacity to ensure the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 4

Provision in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The teaching is not of sufficient quality to ensure all children make as good progress as they might. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities that are above and, in some year groups, well above those that are typical for their age. Progress in the Foundation Stage is inadequate, because the learning is not planned well enough to meet the learning needs of each child. Systems for assessing the progress of each child over time and against national expectations are not well developed. As a result the focus of lessons is not clear to the children and they are not sure what they are supposed to be learning. Sometimes this leads to a loss of interest and concentration and deterioration in behaviour.

Leadership of the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The systems and frameworks required to plan a pathway through the learning are underdeveloped and not fully effective. Assessment is not used to address the learning needs of individual pupils or to guide them about what they need to do to improve. The Foundation Stage coordinator has created a bright and interesting environment. When they are kept interested and involved they work and play hard and show good attitudes to learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the planning of the curriculum and of the teaching to provide appropriate challenge for all pupils.
- Focus the work of leaders and managers on improving pupils' progress and achievement.
- Monitor the work of the school more closely and use information from evaluation to plan for further improvement.
- Improve assessment systems and make more consistent and effective use of them to track and analyse pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards at the end of Year 6 are average but they are not as high as they should be and pupils' achievement is inadequate. Children enter the school with skills and abilities that are above and, in many cases, well above those that are typical for their age. At the end of the Foundation Stage, they reach levels of attainment above those expected for their age. The pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons in Years 1 and 2. The results of Key Stage 1 assessments in 2007 were above average in English and significantly above average in mathematics. Reading is stronger than writing. The achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 is inadequate. The school's results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have declined year on year for the past four years and in 2007 were only just above national averages overall. Pupils achieved better in mathematics and science than in English, where achievement was slightly below the national average. During the past three years, the results show that pupils have not made enough progress to attain the standards of which they were capable. This includes the pupils who took the tests in 2007, whose results nevertheless showed a slight improvement over the previous year. The very small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted or talented progress at a similar rate to other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Through assemblies, displays, the good range of visits and visitors, pupils learn to become thoughtful and self-aware. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and this is supported by their above-average attendance and cheerful demeanour. They are bright, articulate and have very positive attitudes to learning. They respond particularly well when they are appropriately challenged in lessons. Behaviour is almost always good within the classroom and around the school. Pupils exhibit high self-esteem and communicate confidently with each other and with adults. Pupils confirm that they feel safe and know what to do if they are anxious or distressed. Bullying is rare and there have been no exclusions in recent times. Pupils are well informed about the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise. However they agreed that they do not always make healthy choices. The school holds the national Healthy Schools Award. Healthy snacks provided by the school are popular with the younger children. The school council is active and has been instrumental in recommending improvements to the school. Pupils also have opportunities to take responsibility around the school, for example in the library and in the wider community with involvement in music and drama performances and fundraising for charity. The school provides enterprise activities such as the cake stall work, and this, along with pupils' levels of basic skills, provides satisfactory preparation for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching is inadequate overall and does not meet the pupils' needs. Lesson plans are poor. What pupils should be learning is not always clear and methods for checking what has been learnt are not consistent. Activities are not planned to provide a sequence of learning and planning contains little or no reference to meeting the differing needs of individuals or groups in these mixed-age classes. Pupils' progress is not tracked carefully enough and, as a result, teaching fails to challenge all pupils or create sufficient additional learning opportunities for the most able. A high proportion of learning is teacher-dominated and does not provide opportunities for pupils to develop as independent learners or become involved in practical activities.. Opportunities for children to learn from each other are also missed. Teaching assistants are not always well used to support pupils with their learning. Pupils have simple targets in some subjects but these do not relate to progress through the National Curriculum framework. Work is marked regularly and pupils receive praise and encouragement for their work. Comments to show pupils where they have made mistakes or what they need to do to improve are rare. Teachers promote good relationships and good standards of behaviour. Consequently, pupils display very positive attitudes to learning. All staff have interactive whiteboards and access to computers but the use of these resources to support teaching and learning is at an early stage of development and use of ICT is not planned for across the curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum includes all subjects required by the National Curriculum and the school places an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy but less so on ICT. The curriculum is not well planned and organised. Schemes of work, for example, are underdeveloped and do not show progression well or indicate opportunities for links between subjects. Curricular planning does not always provide sufficient challenge or support to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The pupils are enthusiastic about the school's many high-quality opportunities for enrichment, which are taught by part-time teachers. For example music, dance, drama and the provision of Spanish throughout the school are good features. The curriculum is also enriched by the many visits and visitors including a recent visit to see Scrooge which is to be the school's Christmas production.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Pupils are well cared for and the staff are highly committed to encouraging enjoyment and ensuring pupils remain safe and feel secure. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are in place and procedures for child protection are understood by all staff. The school has appropriate guidelines to ensure pupils' health, safety and freedom from harassment. However, pupils are inadequately informed about their achievements, their next learning steps and what they need to do to reach them because their progress is inadequately monitored. Systems for tracking progress are not linked to lesson planning and pupils are not set challenging individual targets. Mechanisms for identifying underachievement or pupils who require additional challenge are not clear and consistent. As a result, not all groups of learners are equally well served.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate and are not successfully focused on raising standards or achievement. The headteacher, supported by all the staff, has created a climate in which all pupils are equally valued and in which they feel secure and happy, and the promotion of pupils' personal development is good. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and they very much appreciate its caring ethos and the impact it has on their children's confidence and self-esteem. The school does not evaluate its work effectively and does not have a realistic view of its weaknesses. This is because there are too few systems to check regularly, formally and accurately the impact of what the school provides. As a result of this poor self-evaluation, key priorities - particularly in relation to achievement, standards, teaching and learning - have not been fully recognised or addressed. Subject coordinators do not regularly and consistently monitor the teaching of their subjects across the school. Because there are no mechanisms for tracking the relative performance of groups or individuals, the school has difficulty in identifying strengths and weaknesses in both provision and delivery.

The governing body supports the school but governors are not active in challenging the school about its performance or in monitoring and evaluating its work. Assisted by the local authority, the school sets targets but these are not based upon a detailed and accurate analysis of the tracking of progress and attainment and have not led to an improvement in standards. Because pupils do not achieve as well as they might, the school provides inadequate value for money.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	2
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?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Sabden Primary School, Lancashire, BB7 9DZ

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome in your school and for talking to me so confidently and enthusiastically. I was interested to see the work you were doing and in listening to you talk about it. Talking to the school council, watching the assembly, dance class and your rehearsal for Scrooge made me realise how much you enjoy being at school.

You tell me that you feel safe and well cared for and I know your teachers and the other adults in the school work hard to make sure you are happy and secure. It is good to know bullying is rare and to see you all getting on so well together. You know quite a lot about the importance of healthy food and lots of exercise, although some of you do admit to being tempted by less healthy food. It is also good to know that you enjoy all the extra activities which the school provides, such as the Spanish and music tuition, and that you do many things in the local community.

What the school does not do well is to provide you with interesting and challenging opportunities to make sure you make the best progress you possibly can. I have recommended that the school is given 'special measures'. This means that inspectors will return each term and your school will receive extra support so that in future:

- All your lessons are carefully planned to ensure that each one of you is working at the right level for your ability
- You will all be quite clear about what you have achieved and what you need to do next to make the maximum amount of progress
- The school has good systems for supporting you in your learning and measuring the progress you are making
- That the school focuses its work on helping you achieve as much as you can.

Of course you can help a tremendous amount by remaining enthusiastic about your work, working hard and doing your very best. I wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Penter

Lead inspector