

Ashton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119238
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313227
Inspection dates	14–15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Darren Evans
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah Barraclough
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2003
School address	Ainsdale Drive Ashton-on-Ribble Preston Lancashire PR2 1TU
Telephone number	01772 728052
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school situated on the edge of a well established local authority housing estate on the outskirts of Preston. The area has elements of social and economic disadvantage, and the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than usual partly because the school provides 16 places for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Nursery education and care before and after school are undertaken by a private provider on the same site. Over recent years, the school has had a significant increase in the number of pupils entering the school in the older year groups.

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. It is a calm and orderly place with a welcoming atmosphere. The parents are rightly confident that their children receive good care and support. Pupils clearly enjoy school, especially the friendships they make and the opportunities for sport and creative activities. Pupils' personal development is good. Most pupils are lively in lessons and keen to learn. Attendance is average overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Behaviour is good and pupils work well together in lessons, effectively developing skills of co-operation and respect for the views of others. Their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is effectively supported by guidance in assemblies and in the day-to-day work of the school. Relationships with staff are positive. The pupils feel safe because they know the staff give praise when deserved, listen to their concerns and help them if they have a difficulty. Although some find it difficult to speak in a large group, most have the confidence to share their views and are willing to modify their ideas during discussions in lessons.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Children make a good start in the Reception year due mainly to good teaching and assessment, and the attainment of most is close to the expectations for their age by the time they enter Year 1. As pupils consolidate their learning over the next two years their progress, although satisfactory overall, tends to slow a little especially for the most able pupils. The school's 2007 national assessments for Year 2 pupils continued to show the improvements made in recent years although they were still below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Too few pupils attained the higher levels. In Key Stage 2, although pupils' progress remains satisfactory overall, the most able make good progress. National test results for Year 6 show improvements in recent years, especially in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics and science, although less so in English. Standards by Year 6 are average overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well for their abilities. The pupils with speech and language difficulties make good progress, responding well to their inclusion in lessons as well as to the additional support they receive.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The good relationships between staff and pupils create a positive environment for learning. Pupils trust staff to help them to do better and so co-operate willingly by venturing to share their ideas in lessons and persevering when tasks are difficult. Behaviour is well managed with praise given where deserved and opportunities used well to encourage the more reticent pupils. However, the planning and checking of pupils' learning are not rigorous enough and this leads to inconsistencies in the progress pupils make between year groups and subjects. Each class includes a wide range of ability and, until recently, staff have not had readily available assessment data to help them set suitable levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. This has resulted in the progress of some pupils being too slow and the guidance on how to improve being too general to have maximum impact on standards. In the best lessons, where expectations are high and planning is well matched to the pupils' needs, they make good progress. The curriculum is satisfactory with good opportunities for physical activity and personal development.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has effectively initiated several essential developments such as improvements in the systems for collating assessment data to check the progress pupils make. The support of staff with specific responsibility for these initiatives has enabled the school to move forward quickly. The school's self-evaluation procedures are under review and have already increased the understanding of staff and governors

about the school's strengths and priorities for development. The governing body is satisfactory and works closely with the headteacher. All those with leadership responsibilities are committed to improving the school further and are engaged in the early stages of revised planning for the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well led and effective. When they start school in the Reception year, the attainment of most children is a little below that typical for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy skills. However, individual children vary considerably in what they know and can do, and some are confident and articulate. Good teaching and assessment ensure that children of all abilities enjoy their learning and make good progress, with the majority of children working at the levels expected by the end of the Reception year. The children work well together and show awareness of each other's needs. Planning of the children's learning is carefully structured across all areas of learning and takes good account of the needs of individual children. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing the children's speech and language skills. They experience a wide range of activities and are encouraged to work independently although opportunities to make choices about their learning are sometimes limited.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially for the most able pupils, in order to raise standards particularly in Key Stage 1 and in English throughout the school.
- Plan more precisely the learning of pupils of different abilities and their progress through the school, taking full account of the school's assessment information.
- Develop a school improvement plan that clearly identifies key priorities and the expected impact of the work of those with leadership responsibilities.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average overall. The school's intake includes pupils with a wide range of competence although it tends to be below that which is typical. Pupils' progress through the school is satisfactory overall but is too variable from year to year. This is mainly because assessment data is not used effectively enough for all pupils to have the level of challenge in lessons accurately matched to their different abilities. As a result, some groups of pupils make better progress than others. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with identified speech and language difficulties achieve well, as do children in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, although progress is satisfactory overall, the more able pupils in particular do not make enough progress, especially in reading and mathematics. Progress accelerates in Key Stage 2 but not consistently so. National assessment results for Year 6 pupils in 2007 indicated good progress for most pupils, including the most able, in mathematics and science but results in English continued to be below national averages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This aspect is a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to learn, behave well and have good relationships with each other and the staff. They say they feel safe in school, and are knowledgeable about the decisions they need to make to stay safe and healthy. Their progress owes much to the care and guidance of the staff in the day-to-day work of the school as well as to specific lessons to help pupils understand themselves and others. By the time they reach Year 6 pupils have a mature approach to the school and wider community, and have the personal and basic academic skills to serve them soundly in the next phase of their education. Independence is encouraged although, occasionally, there is a tendency in lessons to over-direct activities and this hinders independent learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The strengths are in the relationships staff build with pupils and in the regular teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout school. Lessons are calm and well organised, and teaching assistants often provide good support for groups of pupils. The use of assessment to match the teaching and tasks to the needs of individual pupils is the weakest aspect. Although in a minority of lessons this is done well, in most the long introductions and broadly similar tasks do not provide a good match to the wide range of pupils' needs. Staffing is now more stable and the teachers have a strong commitment to professional development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and provides good opportunities for the personal and academic development of pupils. However, it is not always used to the best advantage in lessons. Pupils make good use of opportunities for sport and physical activity and particularly enjoy practical work in art. In the Foundation Stage, the outdoor provision is as yet underdeveloped but the school has plans to improve this.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The staff take good care of pupils' welfare and safety. Support for those pupils who need help with their learning, especially in language development, is effective. Guidance on personal development is good. There is limited use of assessment information to set and check pupils' targets for improvement and provide direction in the marking of books. This reduces the effectiveness of the school's academic guidance; recent initiatives are beginning to improve this aspect. All procedures for Child Protection, risk assessment and safeguarding are in place.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A new headteacher was appointed at the beginning of the term and has already identified essential priorities for development. For example, the assessment system now generates information on pupils' progress and a tracking system is nearing completion. Staff with responsibilities have supported these initiatives effectively, as has the governing body which has several new governors. The strategic plans for development are being reviewed alongside the school's procedures for self-evaluation. Although these are satisfactory at present, they are not sufficiently focused on the key priorities of improving pupils' progress and standards. The capacity to improve and value for money are satisfactory.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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 disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Age group

4–11

Inspection date(s)

14–15 November 2007

Inspection number

313227

16 November 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Ashton Primary School, Lancashire, PR2 1TU

Thank you for making the inspectors so welcome when we visited your school. You helped us to see how much you enjoyed going to school, meeting your friends and working at your favourite subjects. You like to be active at lunchtimes and have great fun with the help of your play-leaders. You behave well and look after each other, and most of you have good manners. You know about how to keep safe and healthy, and you say you feel safe in school because you know your teachers will take care of you if you have a problem. We were delighted that most of you attend school as often as you can.

We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. By the time you are in Year 6, your standards in mathematics and science are about the same as those of Year 6 children in other schools, but are not high enough in English. We think you can do even better. The school is going to help each of you to attain the best standards you can by planning your lessons more precisely, checking your progress regularly and having even better ideas for the future.

I know you will help by keeping up your attendance and good behaviour, and by persevering with your work even when it is challenging.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jackie Barnes

Lead inspector