

Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119286
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313240
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Peter McKay

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	417
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Keith Leaver
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Entwistle
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Severn Drive Walton-le-Dale Preston Lancashire PR5 4TD
Telephone number	01772 335065
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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

The school is larger than average and serves a mainly residential area of some social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and the number entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is well below average, though the number with a statement of special educational need is above. There has been a significant turnover of staff in recent years. The school operated without a deputy headteacher for the year 2006–2007. Five new teachers took up posts in September 2007, including a new deputy headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, enjoyed by pupils and endorsed strongly by parents. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development fosters positive relationships which underpin learning. Pupils' good attitudes, behaviour and above average attendance help them to achieve well. They contribute to the school in many ways, for example, as classroom monitors, librarians and office receptionists. The school council has helped to improve the school environment although it does not include the youngest pupils. There are many activities where pupils engage with the local community, for example, carol singing in old peoples' homes. Pupils are keenly aware of the benefits of keeping safe and of the importance of exercise and a healthy diet. They develop good skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), which prepare them well for their future learning. Good pastoral care and support ensure pupils are well known and respected as individuals. Pupils say they feel safe and the school has received a Learning Excellence Award for its anti-bullying work. Systems to ensure pupils' safety are in place.

All pupils make good progress at both key stages. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well. Their needs are identified early and they are expected to make the same progress as their peers. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been consistently above average in recent years, until those of a lower ability year group dipped to average in 2007. Key Stage 2 results have been affected by a period of instability in staffing that has meant pupils have not had consistently good teaching throughout their time in school. Year 6 results in 2007 were, like those of previous years, broadly average. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving well with the latter on course to reach challenging targets which are above expectations. There is still scope, however, to raise the achievement of some more able pupils.

Pupils achieve well because teaching and learning are good. Initiatives such as the 'Big Writing' project in English and better use of assessment in mathematics are increasing the progress of pupils in those subjects. Teachers usually provide work closely matched to meet the needs of all pupils but this is not always the case for the more able pupils. The good curriculum makes learning fun and links learning across different subjects. Improved planning in science is beginning to improve pupils' progress. There are good opportunities for creativity through art, music, dance and drama and increasingly for the development of problem-solving and reasoning skills. The local area is used well as a resource to enhance learning. Pupils enjoy the range of additional activities, which contribute well to their personal development. The use of targets to involve pupils in evaluating their own learning is improving, but is not yet a matter routine across the school and does not always raise pupils' awareness of how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management at all levels are good. Accurate self-evaluation gives a clear picture of where improvement is needed. Appropriate actions are put in place, with some evidence of success. Systems to monitor pupils' progress do not make the best use of available information. A strong and active governing body ensures good value for money through sound financial management. The school has improved since the last inspection and has a good capacity to continue to do so in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision is excellent and children make rapid progress in their time in the Foundation Stage. The quality of provision has resulted in the school deservedly gaining a Learning Excellence Award. Most children enter the Nursery with skills typical for their age. By the time they transfer into Year 1, the majority exceed the expected levels in all areas of learning. They do so because adults work closely together to make sure that they learn and play happily together in a very warm and caring setting. Classrooms and outdoor areas are bright and attractive. At all times, children are safe, secure and well cared for. Outstanding teaching provides lively and stimulating activities that fire children's imagination and curiosity so they develop a real thirst for learning. No opportunity is overlooked to promote personal development. Children are continually encouraged to talk about their learning, to work together and to behave politely. They settle quickly to school routines. Expectations are very high. The daily assessments of each child's achievements are recorded meticulously. As a result of this, and close communication between staff, individual learning needs are fully met. Inspirational leadership ensures there is no complacency and staff are constantly seeking new ways of promoting learning and personal development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Refine assessment procedures and ensure that the needs of more able pupils are consistently met.
- Make sure that pupils know what they need to do to improve in their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The achievement of the vast majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. Pupils now enter Year 1 with standards that generally exceed expectations for their age. In the past, this has varied from year to year with levels more in line with those expected. In more recent years, pupils have made good progress in Key Stage 1 to achieve standards that are above average. A fall to broadly average results in 2007 can be attributed to a lower ability year group and some issues of less effective teaching, that have since been resolved. In Key Stage 2, standards in 2007 were broadly average but inspection evidence shows that the progress of pupils has improved considerably this year. It is currently good and pupils are achieving well. This is a result of much better teaching which has significantly raised the expectations of pupils. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 are achieving well. School evidence shows that pupils are on track to do much better in the national tests in 2008 with many exceeding expectations.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in British society is satisfactory. They have a good understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in leading a healthy lifestyle. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and this helps them to make good progress. They say that they enjoy coming to school and attendance is good. Relationships are good and adults act as good role models, so that most pupils are polite and confident. Pupils make a good

contribution to the school and wider communities. They take advantage of opportunities to accept responsibility and help with the smooth running of the school. The school council has a strong voice in helping to improve the school, although that of younger pupils is less influential. Most pupils have a good understanding of the differences between right and wrong, and behaviour is generally good. They develop good skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT, and work particularly well together in groups, which helps to prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching enables all pupils to make good progress. They respond well to lively, stimulating activities and meet teachers' high expectations for hard work. Clear explanations, effective questioning and warm relationships are strong features of most lessons. As a result, pupils are attentive, well behaved and very receptive to learning. Teachers are constantly seeking to improve what they do. Examples include the way that teachers now share the purpose of lessons with pupils, involve them in the use of computerised teaching boards and increasingly exploit marking to help pupils to improve their work. Teachers make regular assessments of learning. However, the information is not used in all classes to challenge the needs of the more able pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and contributes to the pupils' enjoyment of school. Good planning has a flexibility that allows pupils to combine learning from different subjects in studying broad themes and topics. This also includes opportunities to develop skills of reasoning, evaluation and enquiry. There is a good focus on literacy, numeracy and ICT, and recent changes in the science curriculum have had a positive effect on progress. The curriculum is enhanced through good links with outside agencies and other schools. Opportunities to extend the curriculum for more able and gifted pupils are satisfactory and in the process of being increased. Pupils' horizons are widened by residential visits and work in school with dance and drama specialists. Creativity is also developed through a strong focus on music and art. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education that helps pupils to lead healthy lives and become well rounded individuals.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and support are good. Staff know pupils well and maintain good links with families. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for, and this helps them to become confident learners and develop high self-esteem. Good relationships give pupils the confidence to approach an adult, should they have any worries. There are clear guidelines for behaviour and conduct that are well understood by pupils. Procedures for risk assessment, safeguarding and child protection are in place. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. They are well supported, particularly by teaching assistants and by outside agencies, so that these pupils progress at the same rate as their classmates. Staff know their pupils well and most give pupils good quality academic guidance. The use of short-term learning targets and

opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning are increasingly giving pupils a better sense of their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management, including governance, are good. At all levels they have a clear sense of purpose, which is to improve the school's performance. A well conceived development plan prioritises raising achievement and standards by developing all aspects of provision and management. Good systems for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning provide a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. In recent times, effective action has been taken to tackle identified weaknesses such as standards in writing and mathematics, and curriculum provision in science. The tracking of pupil progress generates a wealth of data, but inconsistent procedures make its use awkward. Governors are well led, supportive and actively involved in the school. They effectively challenge and hold the school to account and take decisive action where necessary. Good progress has been made on issues raised at the last inspection and the school's capacity to improve is good.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
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?	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	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	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?	2

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

1 February 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Walton-le-Dale Community Primary School, Lancashire, PR5 4TD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We were pleased to find out how much you enjoy coming to school.

Yours is a good school that helps you to become responsible, confident people who are well prepared for the future. The teachers and other adults take good care of you and make sure you know how to stay healthy and safe. Good teaching and your own positive attitudes help you to make good progress and achieve well. Your behaviour is good and your attendance is better than in most schools.

The headteacher, governors and other staff are working very hard to improve the school even more. However, there are some things we think your school could do better. We have asked the school to give you work that is always suited to your particular level. We have also asked the school to improve the way your progress is measured through the school.

Your progress is improving across the school. Even though your national test results at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average, your achievement is currently good and you are set to do better this year. We hope that all of you will continue to work as hard as you can to make sure you reach your targets – or better still, actually beat them!

Best wishes,

Peter McKay

Lead inspector