

Delph Side Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119304
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313249
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Carole Cressey

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cathie Durgan
Headteacher	Mrs Janette Kewley
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Tanhouse 5 Skelmersdale Lancashire WN8 6ED
Telephone number	01695 721881
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in an area where there are pockets of social and economic deprivation. Most children come from White British backgrounds; a small number are from minority ethnic backgrounds and have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school judges itself to be satisfactory but it is too modest. This is a good school which provides a happy, caring and safe environment in which pupils become successful and confident learners. The school has responded well to recent dips in standards and achievement and has worked effectively with a variety of partners to eliminate its weaknesses.

The pupils achieve well and standards are above average. The headteacher's determined leadership has led to rapid improvements in teaching, the introduction of more rigorous assessment systems and a challenging, responsive curriculum which enriches pupils' experiences. As a result, pupils' learning has accelerated. Standards have risen and continue to do so. Children enter Reception with levels of development that are below those that are typical for their ages. They make good progress through the school, achieve well and, by the end of Year 6, most are working above the nationally expected level for their ages and abilities.

Pupils' personal development is good. Parents are delighted with their children's excellent behaviour and how much they enjoy coming to school. All pupils are keen to do well and this is reflected in their good attendance. Pupils relish the many opportunities to become responsible members of their community. They recycle a wealth of materials and collect money for local and international charities.

Good teaching, a stimulating curriculum and high levels of care, support and guidance throughout the school have enabled most pupils to catch up quickly on the gaps in their learning. There is evidence of good teaching in all year groups. However, in some lessons higher attainers are not always given the extra challenge they need. Assessments also are not consistently effective in tracking pupils' progress and helping pupils know how well they are doing and what they should do to improve. The school has successfully raised standards in writing. However, there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects to improve their skills further.

There are challenging activities both in and out of school to develop pupils' enthusiasm for learning and an understanding of how they can stay healthy, keep themselves and others safe and become responsible members of their school and local community. The highlight for pupils is the residential visit in Years 5 and 6. Parents say their children start talking about this in Year 3 and are still talking about it many years later! The way the school nurtures all its pupils and especially those with complex difficulties and/or disabilities is very good and, as a result, they are able to take advantage of all the school has to offer.

The parents' overwhelming confidence in the leadership and management of the school is very well placed. This is a good school; it provides good value for money and is well placed to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is good. The good quality of leadership and management ensures that the Nursery and Reception classes are good places to learn, enabling children to make good progress towards the expected learning goals for their ages. Considerable emphasis is placed on helping children to learn to be kind and sociable individuals who can share, wait their turns and begin to see how their actions affect others. Well matched and challenging work brings relevance and enjoyment to learning. Wherever possible, children

handle real materials and staff are on hand to extend children's knowledge and understanding. The indoor and outdoor environments support and extend children's spontaneous play. Basic skills of speaking, listening, reading, writing and numeracy are woven into activities well and most children are well launched into reading, writing and numeracy by the time they move into Year 1. However, not all activities have sufficiently clear outcomes for children to ensure they get the maximum learning from each experience. Children with complex additional needs receive high quality care. This includes staff learning sign language so they can communicate with any children who have a hearing impairment. The very few children learning English as an additional language make rapid strides in acquiring English because of the very focused support they receive from their teachers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all pupils know how to improve their work and know how well they are doing in relation to their long term targets.
- Provide more planned opportunities for pupils to write in all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are above average. After a period of low standards and underachievement, standards across the school have risen and are continuing to do so. Progress has accelerated.

Most pupils reach the learning goals expected for their ages and abilities at the end of the Reception Year. This positive start is built on well in Key Stage 1. Progress is good and standards at the end of Year 2 have risen year on year. The school's results of national assessments for seven-year-olds in 2006 showed that standards were average. In the 2007 assessments the results were even higher. Almost every pupil reached the nationally expected level and over half of the pupils reached the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.

In Key Stage 2, results in the 2006 national tests for 11-year-olds were well below average, especially in English, and most pupils did not achieve their best. The school acted quickly to address these poor results. As a result, standards in 2007 showed a significant improvement. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made rapid strides in their learning and over 80% are now working at the nationally expected level and over a third at the higher levels. The school is likely to meet its ambitious targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are making good progress toward their targets and a significant number are close to reaching the expected level for their ages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is excellent and pupils are eager to learn and are rising to the higher expectations their teachers now have of them. Year 6 pupils feel their teachers prepare them well for moving on to high school by giving them more independence and setting more challenging work. This positive approach to learning is reflected in their improved attendance and rapidly improving standards. Pupils know how to keep fit and safe and are learning why it is sensible to have a balanced diet. Breakfast club and lunchtimes see pupils choosing lots of fruit and wholesome foods. Boys and girls thoroughly enjoy the many excellent opportunities

to take part in sporting activities. Pupils make a real contribution to the life of their community. They act as 'buddies' and playtime leaders to ensure that everyone feels safe and happy. The elected school council feel their views are heard and are pleased to see their suggestions being implemented. Pupils are also aware of their responsibilities as members of their local and world community. The Eco Group does a splendid job in caring for the environment through recycling a wide range of materials.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good. From the Nursery to Year 6, all teachers have good strategies to promote positive attitudes to learning. Lessons have a very good ethos of hard work and enjoyment which encourages pupils to do their best. In English, teaching pupils to speak and listen is given a high priority; pupils share ideas with talk partners, supplementary questions extend thinking and drama and public speaking encourages confidence in expressing their ideas. Sounds and letters are taught thoroughly and each day all pupils have a sharp, short, fun session to improve their reading and writing. The rigorous assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are becoming increasingly effective in planning future learning and identifying where pupils need extra support or challenge. Work is usually well matched to the needs of different abilities with good levels of challenge. However, when pupils who learn at a faster rate finish their task ahead of other pupils, work is not always provided to reinforce or extend their learning. Although marking is often used well to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their particular piece of work, occasionally marking is too general and pupils are not given sufficient guidance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education. A good programme of social and health education provides the pupils with the necessary tools to develop personal safety, care and healthy living. The school offers extra sporting and musical activities which add a breadth to pupils' learning, which they and their parents value. Every single pupil in Year 6 is learning to play a brass instrument! The school's use of the new national programme for teaching literacy is already having a positive effect on progress. However, planned opportunities for extended writing in subjects across the curriculum are too limited. An exciting range of activities is provided for able and talented pupils through the Excellence Cluster. Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and other activities, including sports, a very successful choir and public speaking, which contribute to their enjoyment and build self-confidence.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety are in line with statutory requirements. This is a very caring school. Good links with external agencies enable staff to provide very effective support for vulnerable pupils. Pupils with learning and complex additional needs are encouraged to play a full part in the life of the school and can be seen acting as playtime leaders and school council members. The behaviour improvement programme has helped pupils manage their anger, resulting in the exceptionally good behaviour both in lessons and at playtimes. The school uses assessment data well to track

individual pupils' progress throughout the year. However, pupils are not given sufficient detail on how well they are progressing towards their long term targets. Parents are extremely positive about the school and feel, as one parent remarked, 'We couldn't have a better school'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has worked unstintingly over the last year to raise standards and eliminate underachievement. The school's self-evaluation accurately identifies strengths and areas for development. Together with the local authority and a range of other partners, those responsible for leading the school, supported by increased challenge from the governing body, have been galvanised into putting in place effective systems to ensure that standards in the school are good. Weaknesses in teaching and the use of assessment were identified as the main areas to improve. The headteacher has sensitively but firmly worked alongside staff to build up their confidence, self-esteem and professional skills. Assessments, test results and the quality of teaching and learning are all monitored rigorously to identify if pupils are falling behind and need additional support to reach their targets. As a result, teaching in all year groups has improved and pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly. The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to continue to raise standards, and equip pupils well for the challenges of the future.

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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?	2
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?	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	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

5 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Delph Side Community Primary School, Lancashire, WN8 6ED

Thank you so much for being very friendly and welcoming when we visited your school a short while ago.

We were so pleased to see how very well behaved you are, how much you enjoy school and how hard you try to attend school regularly and on time. Well done! You are becoming very responsible children and seem to know a lot about how you can conserve all the earth's resources for everyone's future enjoyment.

You all seem to know the importance of eating sensible food and taking lots of exercise. Do keep that up because it is so important to staying healthy and fit. We enjoyed listening to Year 6 learning to play their brass instruments. You have learned such a lot in a short time.

We could see by the work in your books and displays around the school that you are all doing well in reading, writing, mathematics and science. In order to make your school even better, you need more help to know how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve your work further. So listen carefully and pay attention when your teachers talk to you or write comments in your books.

We know your writing has improved a lot recently but it could improve even more, so we have asked that you are given more time to write in other subjects. Then you will be able to practise all the new things you are learning in your English lessons.

You go to a good school where your headteacher and teachers make lessons fun and help you learn such a lot. We hope you will continue to enjoy school as much as you do now and that it will help you to become happy and successful adults.

Yours sincerely

Carole Cressey

Lead inspector