

Leverhulme Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131271
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	315768
Inspection dates	6–7 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Arthur Markham

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	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr John Byrne
Headteacher	Mr Nigel Ashton
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Brightmet Drive Brightmet Bolton Lancashire BL2 6EE
Telephone number	01204 333123
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average sized school opened in September 2006 following the amalgamation of two neighbouring primary schools. It serves an area of above average social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The vast majority of pupils are White British with only a very small number from minority ethnic groups. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school has recently achieved Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This newly created school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and satisfactory value for money. The strong leadership of the headteacher has successfully integrated the staff into a hard working team who share his determination to improve the quality of education provided and to raise standards. In 2007, Year 2 pupils reached standards that were well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. At Year 6, standards in English and mathematics were below the national average, but well below average in science. Determined efforts have been made to improve this situation. A strong emphasis is on improving the quality of teaching. Currently, whilst there is some good and some outstanding teaching, too much is only satisfactory. There is still some inconsistency in the quality of teaching across the school that needs further attention. Other initiatives are supporting the school's efforts to raise standards. Pupils' progress is now tracked closely and they are set reasonably challenging targets. Information about pupils' progress is used to plan intervention for any who appear to be underachieving. This is driving up the rate of pupils' progress. As a result, the underachievement that was evident in 2007 has been eradicated and pupils are making satisfactory progress. Pupils' current work indicates that standards are now much closer to national averages.

The majority of parents are pleased at the way the two schools have come together and the good level of pastoral care provided for their children. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to create a warm and friendly atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and secure. Comments such as, 'The teachers are great with the children', typify the views of parents. However, pupils' academic guidance is less well developed. Although pupils are clearly told what they are to learn in lessons, they are not set individual short-term targets and marking does not give them sufficient guidance about how they can improve.

Pupils say they like school because the teachers are friendly and make learning interesting. They clearly enjoy the range of activities presented to them in the satisfactory curriculum. The drive to raise standards has been supported well by the high priority given to pupils' personal development. Pupils show increasing maturity and concern for others as they progress through the school. In lessons, they discuss issues of discrimination sensibly. In assemblies, their appreciation of the efforts of others is clearly evident as they applaud the award of achievement certificates. The success of initiatives to improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes is clearly evident in their good behaviour in lessons and in the way they play together amicably on the playground. They carry out responsibilities sensibly and make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The introduction of a school council is enabling them to be involved in school life and pupils have worked alongside a local neighbourhood panel to improve the local environment by tackling issues with litter.

The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The newly formed leadership teams are working well. Effective systems to check on the work of the school give the leadership a clear picture of the areas needing improvement. However, the school has overestimated the quality of the academic guidance provided for pupils. Subject coordination is not well developed. Whilst recently appointed coordinators show enthusiasm and a determination to improve provision in their subjects, their impact on standards is limited because they are not yet evaluating the quality of lessons in order to support the drive to improve teaching. Governors are involved in the life of the school and provide satisfactory support and challenge. Given the determination shown by the headteacher, staff and governors to make the amalgamation a

success, the steps being taken to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' accelerating progress, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The quality of provision is good and the Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Induction arrangements are well organised and enable children to settle quickly. Staff know the children well and use assessment effectively to monitor their progress. Teaching is good and staff provide a caring and secure environment so that children quickly grow in confidence. Children enjoy the well organised activities and develop good learning habits. They quickly move to activities and show good concentration and perseverance. The good curriculum presents a balanced diet of teacher led and independent activities, with all areas of learning covered effectively. Nursery children enjoy and benefit from using the outdoor area. However, there are more limited opportunities for Reception children to learn outside. When they enter the Nursery, the skills of the vast majority of children are very much below those typically found for children of their age. Although they make good progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional skills, attainment is still well below that expected when they leave Reception. This is because only about one third of children achieve the expected goals in all six areas of their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good in order to raise pupils' achievement.
- Develop the role of subject coordinators to enable them to take a more active role in improving standards.
- Ensure that pupils are clear about what they must do next to progress in their learning.
- Ensure that teachers' marking gives pupils clear guidance as to how they can improve.

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. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, but because of their well below average attainment on entry to Year 1, and the above average proportion of pupils with additional learning needs, standards are still well below average by the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 3 to 6. The focus being given to improving pupils' writing skills in English, problem solving skills in mathematics and investigative skills in science are having a positive impact. The school's tracking data show that the rate of progress pupils are making is accelerating. The 2008 targets are challenging and, currently, pupils' work indicates that they are likely to be met and that standards are rising. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress overall because they are given good support in lessons and in groups.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Relationships are good and pupils say that they feel safe, have confidence in the adults who care for them and know who to turn to if they have a worry. Most pupils are polite and helpful, work together well in groups, and show good interpersonal skills. Their behaviour is good. They contribute to the life of the school well by carrying out responsibilities enthusiastically. The school council is rightfully proud of the changes that have resulted from their views being taken into account. Pupils' awareness of right and wrong is good and they learn to value one another's views and opinions through the opportunities they are given to discuss issues in pairs and groups. Their good awareness of the need for healthy lifestyles is shown by the school's success in achieving the Healthy Schools Award. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in attendance levels that are slightly above the national average, although the punctuality of a few pupils is less good. Their good interpersonal skills and reasonable basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage in their schooling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. While there is some good and outstanding teaching, this is not consistent across the school. The best lessons are marked by lively teaching and clear explanations, resulting in all pupils actively involved in challenging activities. In these lessons, pupils work well independently or with quality support for sustained periods of time. However, some lessons lack variety of activity and pace, with the result that pupils are not appropriately challenged. Pupils are, consequently, too reliant on adult help and, therefore, much learning time is lost. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers and support pupils with additional learning needs effectively. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers use questions effectively to assess pupils' understanding and regularly monitor pupils' work as they circulate in lessons, but not enough use is made of developmental comments in their marking of pupils' work so that they understand how they could improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum gives close attention to developing the basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Other subjects are covered satisfactorily. The recent introduction of the International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme is adding a new and exciting dimension to the curriculum and promotes pupils' basic skills satisfactorily. Information and communication technology skills are developed satisfactorily and used to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Pupils' cultural development has been enhanced by the introduction of Spanish lessons in Key Stage 2. A wide range of educational visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Year 6 pupils benefit from a residential visit where they experience a range of challenging outdoor pursuits. These effectively promote team building and pupils' personal development and well-being. All pupils have an opportunity to learn a musical instrument. They enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities including sport, dance and the choir. Their skills in these areas are enhanced through the strong links created with a local secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The committed team of teachers and support staff know their pupils well and provide them with a good level of pastoral care. Academic guidance is less well developed. Parents are pleased with the care provided saying, 'If the children have any problem the teachers are very supportive and will try to help in any way they can.' Child protection procedures are in place and health and safety checks and risk assessments are carried out diligently. The school has well developed links with outside agencies and effective systems are in place to identify and support any vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Recently introduced tracking procedures check on pupils' progress closely. However, pupils are not set individual short-term targets and teachers' marking does not give pupils sufficient guidance about how they can do better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has managed the amalgamation well and is providing a clear educational direction to the new school. Rigorous procedures have quickly identified the need to improve the quality of teaching. This is receiving determined attention, including the use of performance management, training and support from the local authority. Still more remains to be done. In addition, subject coordinators do not yet have a strong enough impact on raising standards in their subject. Financial management is good and systems and procedures have quickly been put in place to ensure the smooth running of the school. Governors have played an important role in the successful amalgamation. Their checks on the school's work give them a good awareness of the areas in need of development and they provide satisfactory support and challenge.

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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	NA
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?	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	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?	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	2
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

Inspection of Leverhulme Community Primary School, Bolton, BL2 6EE

On behalf of the other inspectors and myself I would like to thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed talking to you and getting your views. Leverhulme Primary School is providing you with a satisfactory education and it is improving.

We were really pleased to hear how much you enjoy school. The teachers take good care of you and you feel safe and secure. We were delighted at the way you become more grown up as you progress through the school and were impressed with your good behaviour. It was good to hear how much you enjoy the clubs and activities available for you. Your good understanding of the need to eat a healthy diet and to exercise regularly is shown by the school recently achieving the Healthy School Award.

Your headteacher, governors, and all the staff are keen to make sure that Leverhulme Primary is a good school. They have already done a lot and have some good ideas on what they will do next.

We have asked them to make sure you achieve as well as you can so that you do better in English, mathematics and science. To help with this we have asked them to make sure that all the teaching is good. We have also asked them to make sure that each of you is clear about exactly what you should do next to make further progress in English, mathematics and science and to give you more help when teachers mark your work so that you know what you must do to improve. Finally, we have asked the teachers in charge of subjects to keep checking how well you are doing in order to work out how they can help you do even better. You can help by continuing to work as hard as you were in the lessons we saw.

Thank you for helping us so much with the inspection of your school. You are lucky to go to such a warm and friendly school. We wish you well and good luck for the future.