

Platt Bridge Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	134703
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	316273
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Delia Hiscock

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	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jack Pugh
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Darbyshire
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Off Liverpool Road Platt Bridge Wigan WN2 5NG
Telephone number	01942 487999
Fax number	01942 777080

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school opened in September 2006 and is part of a full extended services campus including a Children's Centre, library, health and social care facilities, resourced places for children with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and childcare facilities. This large school is populated from the closure of two local schools. A high proportion of pupils take up free school meals and there are a similarly high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A below average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of those learning English as an additional language has increased during the school's first year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pupils have already benefited from their move into this dynamic and caring school that well meets their needs. Pupils are at ease in the harmonious, unified and calming climate where everyone can and does learn together. The state-of-the-art accommodation has boosted community aspirations and indeed promoted the motto for all providers: 'Forward thinking for a better future'. Relationships and attitudes are good and precise identification of pupils' needs is quickly matched with bespoke provision. This is why pupils feel secure and behave well in lessons. They grow in self-esteem and confidence because they benefit from a range of enjoyable and creative curriculum experiences. In the now familiar surroundings, pupils feel safe and most recognise the needs of and differences in others. This is the result of the school's unequivocal expectations of respecting others. Personal development and well-being are good. Already, pupils are maturing into sensible individuals who work very well together and expect to learn. Pupils take pride in taking part in decisions about the new school. They willingly undertake responsibilities to act as ambassadors for visitors, and to help others at lunchtime and on the playground.

A smooth transition into the new school for all pupils was a prerequisite for everyone, and parents say they are pleased with developments. Effective planning to bring this about ensured that all pupils made a good start. Now, pupils are achieving well because they are taught well. The school has tackled very effectively the needs of the high proportion of pupils entering in all year groups with poor skills in literacy and numeracy. The vast majority of teachers have pulled out all the stops to ensure good progress. They work and plan effectively together and wholeheartedly to blend their professional skills and approaches. The full range of support staff contribute well to teaching and learning for those who are in the early stage of learning to speak English, care for those who are vulnerable and support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Some of the activities provided are inspirational. For example, the imaginative 'Platform nine and three quarters' role play enriches pupils' speaking and writing skills, and entices them into a world of literature they have not previously encountered in such depth. These are some of the reasons why many of the pupils in Key Stage 2, in particular, are learning quickly and enjoy the fun of lessons that sparkle. Standards of work in English and mathematics remain below average at the end of Key Stage 1 and 2 because pupils have lots of catching up to do. The good quality of care, support and guidance features good systems to bring this about. Communication between local agencies and shared aims are informed by outstandingly good use of assessment information. Teachers use assessments very effectively to check progress, identify needs and modify provision accordingly. Leadership and management are good overall. The powerful vision and exceptional skills and insight of the senior leadership team are effectively building the management skills of the staff. Governors are committed to ensuring that pupils gain the skills and qualities necessary to equip them for future life. The school provides good value for money and its capacity to improve further is strong.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Highly organised provision and extensive checking of children's development help them to progress quickly and with growing independence from their low starting points on entry to Nursery. Children in both their Nursery and Reception Years benefit from familiar routines, very caring support and very good resources that help them to soak up new experiences freely

in this stimulating environment. Children progress very well in their language and personal and social skills, their knowledge and understanding of the world and their creative and physical development. They are working towards the standards expected for their age at the end of the Foundation Stage. Strong leadership is developing provision to meet this need and ensure that children move smoothly into Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2007, pupils exceeded the targets set for their performance. This is because all groups of pupils made good and sometimes very good progress in speaking, reading, writing and mathematical skills from their low skills on entry. Preliminary test results for 2007 indicate that pupils attained below average standards at the end of Key Stage 2 in mathematics and English. The exception is science where over half of the pupils attained the higher level. Despite good teaching and learning, pupils' attainments by the end of both key stages are below average in English and mathematics. To improve skills quickly, the school has provided lots of new and exciting learning opportunities. These are beginning to accelerate progress and tackle effectively pupils' communication and calculation skills. Extensive staff training has improved teaching and learning. However, these improvements are not yet fully evident in raised standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attendance is satisfactory and has improved considerably during the past year. This is because pupils enjoy school. Consequently, they grow in self-esteem and confidence, and become happy, well-behaved individuals who are learning to respond to the differences and needs of everyone in the school. They understand clearly what makes up a healthy diet and are able to discuss sensibly the choices they might make to keep themselves safe and fit. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Very effective links with the local community and shared services on the same site have become the galvanising factor that helps to foster pupils' well-being and personal development. This is reflected wholeheartedly in what pupils have to say and the welcome they provide for visitors. These factors have helped pupils to settle in quickly. Many of the pupils need the support of adults to help them in their journey towards independent work. The skills they gain in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are preparing them well for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Typical features of the good quality of teaching and learning are teachers' enthusiasm, the pace of lessons, good relationships and high quality planning of activities that help pupils' to achieve their potential. The pupils' view is that: 'Teachers push us in a nice way to do our best in everything.' Where teaching and learning are outstandingly good, there is a huge focus on enjoyment, challenge and imaginative use of media, literature, ICT and games. Teaching

assistants contribute well and in some instances, outstandingly well which contribute to pupils' learning. In the tiny proportion of uninspiring teaching, the pace is slow, activities are dull and there is not enough regular challenge. In such lessons, the quality of learning, although satisfactory, reduces pupils' opportunities for independent learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs of all pupils and foster interests and enjoyment. Pupils really enjoy working with computers, video cameras and the small Dictaphones available to them for study. For example, they act out roles as journalists or television interviewers. Rich experiences provided to develop speaking and listening skills are having a positive effect. Pupils widen their vocabulary, for example, and learn to discuss moral and spiritual issues. Plans to enrich pupils' literacy and mathematical skills, are injecting creativity and encouraging talk, but are not yet consistent in each year group. Pupils learn a modern foreign language and participate in lots of additional activities including residential experiences, visits, visitors, music and sport. There are good extra-curricular opportunities for pupils and many enjoy taking part in team games.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is good because the personal needs and well-being of pupils are promoted so well, through nurture, bespoke care or support programmes and day to day conversations during which pupils feel they can talk to and trust in adults. In addition, effective use of the resources and strong partnerships support pupils and their families. These features have built rapidly a supportive family atmosphere that exists across the school community. Exceptionally good assessment systems identify needs and, although they are clearly linked to effective academic guidance, they tell pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

In just one year this highly motivated senior team has led dynamically and creatively to develop some exciting provision involving partners from all the services, parents and pupils, all of whom are forging ahead towards their aims for the school.

The head teacher provides strong and effective leadership and management, and is particularly well supported by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and a number of talented staff. Some staff are further developing their leadership skills. Together, this team has instilled accountability, responsibility and consensus, recruited perceptively and developed staff skills and knowledge. Assessment is used successfully as a tool to uncover exactly what needs doing for each pupil. Leadership makes sure that it happens. Extensive monitoring follows on, staff training and performance is built in very well and everyone accepts responsibility for pupils' progress and well-being. Evaluation is sharp, though understandably modest. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are committed to meeting the needs of the community and thoroughly involved in the work of the school.

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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	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	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	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Inspection of Platt Bridge Community Primary School, Platt Bridge, Wigan WN2 5NG.

Thank you so much for being so helpful to us during our visit, and for your kindness when talking with us. We really enjoyed our visit. Like you, we found the new building, resources and playground to be really exciting. We judged your school to be good. We are amazed at how quickly you have settled in during the past year, with new faces around and lots of different things going on.

We enjoyed looking at some of your work and listening to what you said during lessons. We agree with you that staff listen to what you have to say, take good care of you and try to help you to learn quickly and in friendly ways. These are some of the reasons why you behave well and mature into sensible youngsters. The personal qualities you gain are good and will equip you very well for life ahead. Well done!

There is always something that you can do for yourself to improve your skills for the world of work. We think that you can improve your reading and writing skills and those skills that help you to calculate quickly. Have a go at reading lots of enjoyable books and use your brain to do some fun mathematical games. These will help a lot for your futures. We have asked the school to:

- make sure that you improve your skills in English and mathematics.

We would love to come back to see the next magical happenings around 'Platform nine and three quarters' and to take up the very kind offer of 'joining some of you for breakfast' (especially when it is set out so well!). Good luck for the future, and keep up the 'Ambassadorial' work. We think that the Prime Minister will never forget his visit to your school. We won't.