

Atlas Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107295
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	319265
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Philip Cole

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	292
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rafiq Patel
Headteacher	Mr Wahid Zaman
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2007
School address	Lincoln Close Manningham Bradford West Yorkshire BD8 8DL
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

When Atlas Community Primary School was inspected in April 2007, it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to pupils' standards and achievement, teaching and assessment. It was subsequently visited in November 2007, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

This inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school serving an inner city area of Bradford. Almost all pupils are of Pakistani heritage. There is also a small minority of pupils of Bangladeshi heritage and a few pupils from other backgrounds. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and 11 of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is twice the national average. The area from which pupils come has significant social and economic deprivation. The proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and of those with a statement of special educational need are similar to the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

This is a good school that has shown strong improvement in all aspects of its work since the last inspection. It enjoys the wholehearted support of parents because their children 'love school and are very happy'. Parents really appreciate the daily opportunities they have to develop their own skills, to help their children and to become involved in the life of the school. Parents' trust and respect for the school clearly benefits their children's education with, for example, a very high proportion of Muslim girls enjoying the residential visits. It is no surprise that pupils echo these sentiments, eagerly talking about interesting lessons, their kind teachers and the help they are given. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and appreciate that the school listens to what they have to say. They are proud of the improvements they have helped make to school lunches, the healthy tuck shop and the playground equipment they now enjoy using.

Everyone gets on very well and pupils' behaviour is consistently good. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are sensible, for example when working as behaviour monitors. From an early age pupils develop a very good understanding of what they need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way. Their good personal development provides a strong platform for their learning. Pupils' improving basic skills and the school's high expectations enable them to face life's future challenges with increasing confidence.

Standards have been significantly below the national average but have shown steady improvement over recent years. Currently, standards remain below average but are much closer to those expected nationally. Most pupils are from Pakistani backgrounds and they have historically attained less well than their peers nationally. This year they have attained standards above those typically reached by Pakistani pupils nationally. Standards in English lag behind those in mathematics and science, mainly because of weaknesses in writing and particularly in boys' writing over the last five terms. Pupils across the school have made impressive progress as a result of more effective teaching and the improved guidance they have been given on how they can improve. This is reflected in their improved standards and good achievement.

Teaching is good. Weaknesses found during the last inspection have been tackled well. Lessons are closely focused on what pupils need to learn. The work they are set and the skilful support they receive are well matched to their different needs. Pupils in some lessons make faster progress than in others because teachers maintain a more vigorous pace that keeps pupils' interest and involvement high. Pupils' work also shows noticeable improvement because they are given time to respond to the helpful comments that teachers make and because they are given clear targets to aim for in their learning. The teaching of groups of pupils who have been identified as needing extra help, whether this is to do with learning English or a particular difficulty with their learning, is effective and enables them to make good progress.

The school takes care to fine-tune the curriculum to meet pupils' needs and to make it relevant to them. An increasingly practical approach and the effective links made between subjects have made learning more purposeful and enjoyable for pupils, as have well planned visits. There are effective programmes to support pupils' personal development. The school's rigorous approach to safety and to ensuring that pupils are well cared for, means that they feel safe and secure in school and any problems they have are quickly dealt with. Good use of assessment information

is made to target those whose need extra help and to enable all pupils to achieve as well as they can.

The excellent leadership of the headteacher has ensured that very good progress has been made in tackling weaknesses identified at the last inspection. This has not been at the cost of other areas, such as pupils' personal development and their care, guidance and support, which have also improved. The effective leadership team ensures that leadership is now more broadly based within the school. Governors are very supportive, but their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses is too dependent on the information they are given and is not balanced by what they could find out for themselves. This means they are not currently well placed to challenge the school's performance. The school now has a good capacity to make further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills that are low for their age. They make good progress across all the areas of their learning to reach standards that are nonetheless below those usually expected by the end of Reception. The most impressive gains are made in children's personal, social and emotional development, which is close to national expectations by the time they enter Year 1. The weakest areas are in their language and mathematical development, both of which are well below expected levels. Staff are working hard to tackle these weaknesses. All children make good progress because adults assess them carefully and plan provision well to meet their different needs. They ensure that there is a good balance between play activities that children choose for themselves and adult-led sessions that have a particular focus. The latter are well led by adults who carefully encourage and question children to develop their learning. The well resourced outside space is used effectively to promote learning across all the areas. Good leadership and management ensure effective quality and continuity of provision across Nursery and Reception

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, particularly in writing.
- Strengthen governors' ability to hold the school to account.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards in Key Stage 1 have shown steady improvement over the last few years. By the end of Year 2 pupils now reach broadly average standards which compare very favourably with those that were significantly below average in 2004. After a three-year period when standards remained significantly below average in Year 6, they have improved markedly this year and are now broadly average overall. More pupils have reached higher levels in the Year 6 tests and girls, who have attained noticeably less well by Year 6 than boys in the past, have actually attained higher than them this year. In the past, pupils from Pakistani backgrounds, who form a large majority in school, have not attained as well as Pakistani pupils nationally. That gap has now closed and in mathematics and science they reach standards above those typically attained by their peers nationally. Over the last five terms, pupils across the school have made impressive progress in English, mathematics and science. From starting points that are low on entry to the Foundation Stage pupils achieve well to reach standards close to national averages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils behave well and understand what the school expects from them, displaying a keen sense of right and wrong. Most are well mannered and polite. Consequently, the school is a calm and welcoming place. Disputes between pupils are rare and parents are pleased with the school's improvements in this area. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is clearly evident in many lessons and this has increased as the school has improved. Attendance is satisfactory with most pupils arriving on time and attending regularly. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of how to stay safe. They show consideration and an awareness of the needs of others and move sensibly around the school. Most respond well to the school's strategies to encourage healthy living and they talk confidently about taking part in regular exercise and sporting activities. The take up of healthy options at lunchtime is high. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to talk about its successes. The school council is increasingly influential and takes its role in suggesting improvements very seriously. A growing confidence, improved attitudes to learning and good progress in acquiring basic skills are providing the large majority of pupils with a suitable foundation for their future learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Weaknesses in teaching, identified in the last inspection, have been rigorously and effectively tackled. Teachers consistently make learning purposeful for pupils, carefully explain to them what they will learn and what is expected of them. Pupils work hard to achieve these objectives. Teachers match work well to the needs of different groups and ensure that the adults in each class work effectively supporting these groups. Where teaching is best, lessons move along at a lively pace and teachers ensure that pupils are always interested and involved in their learning. Teachers make many helpful comments when they mark pupils' work, give them time to respond to these comments and, as a result, there are clear improvements in their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with a good curriculum that meets all statutory requirements and promotes their learning well. There have been positive developments to the curriculum over the past year, including an intensive focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, teachers routinely plan the development of literacy and numeracy in other subjects and seek to establish meaningful links between all subjects across the curriculum. This helps to make lessons more interesting for pupils and to sustain their interest. Careful checks by the school's senior leadership have ensured that pupils experience an appropriate balance between different subjects. Extra support for pupils in danger of falling behind is proving to be successful and is making a substantial contribution to improving these pupils' basic skills. Good use is made of educational visits and visitors to extend and enrich pupils' learning. Pupils derive significant benefit and enjoyment from these activities and this is evident in displays and workbooks.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents and pupils speak highly about these areas of the school's work. For instance, representative views from pupils include: 'Teachers are kind and helpful. They always help you with your work and if you are worried about anything.' Good quality care for pupils is also seen in the high level of commitment of staff to encouraging enjoyment and achievement and in promoting pupils' health and safety. Social development and good behaviour are well promoted through a system of rewards and sanctions which is effective in guiding pupils' personal development. Arrangements for pupils' safeguarding are clear and regularly reviewed, and health and safety is carefully managed. In this safe and supportive environment pupils reach challenging targets. The learning mentor, home-school liaison officer and teaching assistants all make a good contribution to supporting pupils' learning in the classroom and during small-group work. The school works well with parents and other agencies to ensure that all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, make good progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. Through his determined, yet thoughtful and calm approach he has very successfully raised expectations, decisively tackled weaknesses in teaching and learning and broadened the effectiveness of leadership and management in the school. He is ably supported by an enthusiastic and increasingly effective leadership team. The school undertakes robust and rigorous self-evaluation. This underpins well thought out plans for improvement that are very effectively implemented. Although governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses they are too dependent on the information they are given and have not developed strategies that would enable them to find out for themselves how well it is doing. Given the much improved standards and achievement and quality of the school's provision, it now provides good value for money.

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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	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	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?	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**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We think that the school is now a good school and no longer needs a Notice to Improve. Your teachers now do a good job. Your lessons are well planned and everyone helps you to make good progress. We were impressed with how you try to make your work better by doing what the teachers say when they mark your books.

The improvements have happened because you have an excellent headteacher who is well supported by the senior teachers in the school. They have made sure that weaknesses in some of the teaching have been tackled and that information on how you are doing is now used well to help you to do even better. At the same time everyone in school has worked hard to make your lessons more interesting and to make sure you are all well looked after. We were impressed with how polite you are, how well you all get on with each other and with your good behaviour. You have a good understanding of what you need to do to keep fit and healthy and out of harm's way. You have also had good ideas to help make improvements; the delicious school lunches are an example of this!

Although you are doing much better, your standards in English, particularly in writing, are not as good as they are in mathematics and science. We have, therefore, asked the headteacher, teachers and governors to make sure you do as well in English as you do in other subjects. The governors are very enthusiastic about the school and they are keen to help it to improve further. We have asked them to look more closely for themselves at how well it is doing so that they are in a better position to do this.