

Lydiate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104891
Local Authority	Sefton
Inspection number	324125
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Gornall HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	325
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Conolly
Headteacher	Mr D Batchelor
Date of previous school inspection	March 2006
School address	Lambshear Lane Lydiate Liverpool L31 2JZ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, the chair of governors, staff, members of the school council and other groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including: teachers' planning and assessment files, the school development plan, the school brochure, and records of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities including a number of associated individual education plans. Inspectors also examined a sample of the pupils' books from each year group.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning meet the needs of the pupils in the single and mixed-age classes
- the achievement of the most able
- the pupils' cultural awareness to see if has been strengthened since the time of the previous inspection
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels
- whether any aspects of the school's provision were outstanding.

Information about the school

Lydiate Primary is a larger than average school situated in Lydiate on the edge of the larger community of Maghull. The school admits up to 45 pupils each year into its two Reception classes and also has a 30 place Nursery which together form the Early Years Foundation Stage. The headteacher has been in post since the autumn term 2007. Very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and a smaller than average proportion of pupils have identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides a breakfast club and after-school care for pupils between 6 and 11 years. The school hosts a privately funded care provision for pupils aged two to five which is the subject of a separate inspection.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Lydiate Primary is a good school that also has some outstanding features. It has a friendly, calm and welcoming atmosphere that is quickly noticeable to visitors. The pupils are an absolute delight; they exhibit a love for school and a desire for learning which is reflected in their positive responses in lessons, their excellent behaviour and their above average attendance. The school is well organised and the school day runs smoothly. Pupils' attainment on entry is slightly higher than that expected for pupils of four years of age.

The pupils achieve well in lessons and they make good progress as they move up through school. By the time they leave the school they attain standards that are above the national average. The most able pupils are appropriately catered for and their achievement is also good. There are no significant differences in the achievement of boys or girls or in other groups. Pupils do particularly well in mathematics and science. In English, standards are also above average particularly in reading, speaking and listening and in technical aspects of their writing such as spelling, punctuation and grammar. Some aspects of pupils' writing, however, are underdeveloped but the school has already identified this and opportunities for the pupils to write more frequently and for different audiences and purposes have been extended.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lively and interesting teaching coupled with well motivated pupils creates an atmosphere of purposeful learning that is the hallmark of the vast majority of lessons. Classroom support staff do a terrific job in effectively supporting both pupils and the teachers. The pupils are assessed regularly and records of their progress are used effectively to gauge how well they are doing and who might benefit from additional help and support. The quality of the marking of the pupils' work, although well-intentioned, is too variable between classes. This means that some pupils are not always sure how well they are doing in a subject or what they need to do next to improve.

The curriculum offered to the pupils is a particular strength of the school. It is wide ranging and carefully planned so that it meets the needs of pupils in both the single and mixed-age classes. Some teachers have particular expertise in subjects such as music, French and physical education and they teach several classes to ensure their expertise is suitably shared. The headteacher and staff work hard to enrich the pupils' opportunities by offering a range of additional experiences in the form of

clubs and activities. This aspect of the school's provision is regarded by the pupils as one of its strongest features and is much appreciated by them. The pupils feel safe in school and well cared for. The pupils' cultural awareness has improved since the time of the previous inspection and they have a good appreciation of the beliefs and feelings of others, accepting these may differ from their own.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are taught well and they get off to a good start, developing confidence and abilities in an appropriate learning environment. They are eager learners who achieve standards slightly above average for their age. Their social skills are developed well and the children listen and follow instructions readily. However, opportunities for learning through investigation and play outdoors are insufficiently integrated into the early year's curriculum and are hampered further by a shortage of hard play space and limited resources.

The relatively new headteacher has taken effective steps to raise the profile and role of other leaders and managers within school and, although some roles are still being developed, the school is well placed to respond to change. This strengthening of the leadership team is well judged because the school is facing new challenges in relation to the changing nature of its pupil population. Senior managers monitor and evaluate the school's performance and have a strong awareness of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Inspectors found the school's own self-evaluation to be accurate, if a little modest in parts. Governors provide good support and safeguarding procedures are effective. The school has good capacity to develop further because senior managers are maintaining strengths but also tackling areas for improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Encourage the application of pupils' writing skills across the curriculum to further enhance their ability to write for different purposes and audiences.
- Improve how the pupils' work is marked so that they are better informed about how well they are doing and what the next steps in their learning might be.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that learning opportunities outside of the classroom are a regular and integral part of the children's experiences.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

2

Pupils achieve well and receive good levels of support. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary and throughout the school the pupils relish opportunities to discuss their thinking: they respond well to challenging questions. The school's performance in national tests has been consistently good over time with most of the pupils achieving above average standards. The pupils' books vary a little in the quality of work they contain but overall show good levels of progress. The standards reached by pupils in music are higher than found in most schools. It was a real treat to hear the quality of singing produced by the school choir and to read the local press coverage of previous musical events. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally

good progress because the school is not only tailoring work specifically to their needs but also effectively promoting inclusiveness by encouraging equal participation in lessons and other activities. In addition, the school works effectively with a range of local services to support and raise individual pupil outcomes.

The pupils’ spiritual, moral and social understanding is outstanding and reflected daily in their interactions with each other and with adults. The pupils have a clear understanding of school rules and rewards. They describe school as a warm and friendly place and agree that any form of bullying is extremely rare. The school’s promotion of healthy lifestyles is strong and emphasised in lessons, assemblies and through displays. Consequently, pupils speak very confidently about diet, exercise and health-related issues. Pupils make a good contribution to school life and their views are heard and acted upon. In the wider community they work hard to raise money for charitable causes. The pupils’ questionnaire responses were overwhelmingly positive about what the school has to offer them and how they are treated.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils’ attendance	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school’s work

Teaching is typically good. It is thoughtfully planned to ensure that pupils are provided with a range of activities and tasks geared to their various needs. Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally use effective questioning strategies to keep pupils alert and learning. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support learning when pupils are working in pairs or individually, but they are sometimes less well used to support and focus pupils during whole class teaching. In all classes, pupils’ work is assessed and the school uses this information effectively to check that pupils are not falling behind and to put in place effective intervention strategies if necessary. The link between assessment and the setting of individual targets is becoming embedded. There are highly effective links with local schools and

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

other partner organisations to promote a cohesive approach to education including how pupils are cared for and supported. This has enabled the pupils to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school. The school's link with Sefton's innovative Pupils' University is particularly effective in building pupils' self-esteem and sense of achievement. Varied curriculum opportunities made available to all pupils help to make the school's motto a reality: 'if you can dream it, you can do it'. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, as confirmed by their questionnaire responses.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	1
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and his newly developed senior management team have been successful in building upon the school's existing good performance so that outstanding aspects are now emerging. The headteacher is a strong and purposeful leader who has an accurate view of the quality of the school's provision and the direction it should take. His monitoring of teaching and learning has resulted in useful feedback to inform development. He has a high teaching commitment and is involved in many before- and after-school activities that take up much of his time. The assistant headteacher also teaches full-time. Considering the size and complexity of the school, the amount of time the headteacher spends teaching, although worthwhile, does restrict his availability for day-to-day leadership and management activities.

The school's highly effective work to promote equality is illustrated by pupils' participation in lessons and in after-school activities, and also by the narrow attainment gap between boys and girls. The school's strategy for encouraging pupils' writing is beginning to pay dividends. Governors provide good support and a healthy level of challenge. The chair knows the school well. The school development plan is a thoughtfully considered document. The school's relationship with parents and carers is very effective.

Safeguarding procedures are robust. The school has made appropriate checks on all adults working within it and maintains a rolling programme to ensure its single central record of such checks is updated at recommended intervals. Health and safety checks are rigorous and risk assessments have been undertaken appropriately. The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion and is actively seeking ways to enhance this further by, for example, linking with other schools with different ethnic, cultural and socio-economic dimensions. Visits to places of worship of faiths other than their own have broadened the pupils' awareness of religious and cultural diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	1
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	2
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	2
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	2
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is effective and the children make good progress. Practitioners provide a well planned range of activities, effectively tailored to children of different abilities, and well balanced across the six early learning areas. The children were confident and very keen to talk to inspectors about the work and play in which they were involved. Effective processes are in place to develop children's phonic and listening skills. Children learn new sounds and their corresponding link to letters at an appropriate level and pace. Behaviour is excellent and children are exceptionally tolerant and understanding of each other. All groups of children play and learn well together and learning is seen as fun. They develop a good understanding of staying safe, handling resources such as scissors carefully. Outdoor learning is not as prominent as it should be. Although indoor storage space is a little restricted, resources for learning are well organised but a few are looking a little tired and worn. Practitioners take good care of the children, ensuring they are suitably dressed for activities. Assessment files demonstrate that regular, high quality observations of children's learning inform planning for their development.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
Overall effectiveness: how well does the setting/school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over 80 parents or carers returned questionnaires to inspectors, which is slightly below what might have been expected for a school of this size. The vast majority of those parents who responded are very satisfied and happy with the school. Parents regard this school as a very caring, supportive and inclusive place. There were very few parental criticisms and those that were offered were constructive. There were no particular trends in the small number of criticisms received by inspectors.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

27 February 2009



Dear Children

Inspection of Lydiate Primary School, Liverpool, L31 2JZ

Thank you so much for helping us when we came to inspect your school. You were all terrific and we enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. Thanks also for sending us your views through the questionnaires we asked you to complete. We judged that your school is really good and that some of what you do is brilliant! You have a really good headteacher and very caring teachers and other staff who help you. This will not surprise you, as most of you, and your parents, think the same. These were the points we liked most about your school.

- You enjoy your learning and you try your best and make good progress in all your subjects.
- You love discussing your work and you share your ideas well with your talking partners and people around you.
- Your behaviour is the best we have seen for some time. Inspectors were impressed that you held doors open for them and greeted them cheerfully.
- Your teachers and other staff work hard to provide you with good lessons and do their best to make things interesting and help you to succeed.
- Your headteacher and other leaders know what needs to be done to make your school an even better place to be.
- You can take part in many exciting activities and clubs before and after school and at lunchtimes. We wanted to come back and have a go at 'golden time' ourselves!

To help the school become even better, we have said that senior leaders should:

- continue to help you to improve your writing so you gain confidence in writing for different purposes
- improve how the teachers mark your books and pieces of work so that you know how well you are doing and what you might need to do to improve your work even further
- improve the facilities and opportunities for the children in Nursery and Reception to go outside more to learn.

All the inspectors enjoyed visiting your lovely school. Thank you and good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Gornall
Her Majesty's Inspector

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