

Bryn St Peter's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106438
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	324400
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Reporting inspector	John Dunne

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	203
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Brian Yates
Headteacher	Mr C Calderbank
Date of previous school inspection	29 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Downall Green Road Ashton-in-Makerfield Wigan Lancashire WN4 0DL

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 February 2009
Inspection number	324400

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Age group 4–11

Inspection dates 9–10 February 2009

Inspection number 324400

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average sized school. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportions of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is slightly higher than average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class. The school has received a number of awards including: the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark, FA Charter Standard Award, the Eco School Green Flag award and the Financial Management Standard in Schools. A recently opened before and after school club is based in the school, which was not included in this inspection.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Determined and clearly focused leadership and management from the headteacher and senior and middle leaders give this highly caring school a strong sense of purpose. As a result pupils achieve well and standards are rising. Pupils enjoy school and parents are overwhelmingly appreciative of the individual attention pupils receive. Some parents' views encapsulate those of the majority, 'I could not ask for a better school and feel my child is doing really well', and 'My child needs one to one support and this is no problem in this very supportive school.'

Children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below those expected of four-year-olds. Furthermore, some aspects such as the early skills of writing are even lower. However, they leave Year 6 with standards that are above average in English, mathematics and science. This represents good achievement. It is not yet outstanding because pupils' writing does not advance quickly enough before they reach Year 3. This is partly caused by a lack of opportunities, in Years 1 and 2, to discuss their ideas before writing them. Questions in lessons often require one word answers. As a result, pupils are not encouraged to explain, justify their reasons or challenge opinions of others. By contrast, pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is good in reading and mathematics. Leadership and management are being influential in raising standards in Key Stage 1. Recent measures are having an impact on pupils' progress by the end of Year 2, but it is too early to see substantial gains in writing. Achievement rises in a more uniform fashion between Years 3 to 6 to produce the above average standards in Year 6.

The reason why progress gathers pace particularly well, including that in writing, from Year 3 to 6, is that senior and middle leaders have collaborated effectively with teachers to identify gaps in pupils' learning and implemented effective strategies to bring about rapid improvement. This kind of analysis is beginning to take place in Key Stage 1, but it is at an early stage.

Teaching is good because thorough lesson planning and well targeted support from teaching assistants provide a wide range of learning activities. Consequently, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most gifted are equally challenged, and so all progress well. Teachers link subjects together around common themes, which pupils find interesting, and so they are motivated to learn. Good marking helps pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to focus on next to improve.

Pupils, throughout the school, make good progress in their personal development. Relationships are very positive and pupils feel safe in an atmosphere that is pleasant and calm. Parents comment that, 'St Peter's is a lovely school with a family feel' which echoes what inspectors saw. Pupils are able to provide many examples of their understanding of healthy lifestyles. They readily help around school and are proud of the contribution they are able to make through the many opportunities to take positions of responsibility.

The quality of care the school provides for pupils is exemplary. Staff are extremely vigilant and identify the needs of every pupil very carefully. They provide highly effective support and guidance for all aspects of pupils' welfare, safety, academic and personal development.

The accuracy of leaders and managers in identifying areas for improvement, the robust challenges they have implemented which are clearly beginning to have a positive impact, rising standards and the good progress made by all pupils give the school a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Leadership in the Reception class has been effective in improving provision overall, but has not yet been successful in accelerating children's progress in writing from their low levels on entry. This is why the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory rather than good. By contrast, children make good gains in their mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Consequently, they reach levels broadly in line with those expected at the end of the Reception year, except in writing. Indoor and outdoor resources and learning opportunities are well used and stimulate children's interest and learning. Children showed their excitement to learn about dinosaurs. They were keen to use bikes and scooters to hunt for dinosaurs outside. They enjoyed working independently and together to construct dinosaur models, engage in role-play, visit their own dinosaur museum and record their findings. They marvelled as they discovered the dinosaurs inside coloured ice and used magnifying glasses to uncover hidden dinosaurs in clay. However, adults often missed the many opportunities to develop children's language and vocabulary enough to improve their writing. Good attention is paid to promoting the welfare of children, including very effective use of outside agencies. Adults care well for the children and keep them very safe. Consequently, vulnerable and shy children are well supported and grow in self-esteem. Parents are well informed about the progress their children make.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of writing in Reception.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas in Years 1 and 2 to quicken their progress in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2. Currently, evidence in school demonstrates that achievement has improved in reading and mathematics, but still lags a little behind in writing. Sentence construction and the confident use of adventurous vocabulary are often weaker elements in pupils' written work owing to the lack of opportunities to try out ideas before they put them down on paper. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards have risen for three consecutive years. The school's evidence about standards at the end Key Stage 2 in 2008 shows that they were above the nationally expected level. This is complemented by current achievement and progress in Year 6, which is equally good. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the most gifted progress well owing to the challenging targets they are set and the way that teachers plan work productively that is adapted to suit their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being of pupils are good. Pupils' moral and social development is a strength, for example, in the way they show respect for others and have a strong sense of right and wrong. In assembly pupils enthuse in their singing and reflect thoughtfully about religious assemblies and prayers. This contributes well to their good spiritual development. Pupils behave well, so there is very little bullying or other aggressive behaviour. There are many

opportunities to explore other cultures in discussion time and to consider global issues, for example, climate change and the destruction of the rain forests. Pupils also work hard on composting and recycling. Pupils enjoy making regular donations to local and international charities and singing and giving drama performances for the local community. As a result of effective provision, there are many examples of pupils adopting healthy lifestyles, including the understanding of issues surrounding smoking and drugs, safe use of cycles, the understanding of dental health, and rail hazard awareness. Pupils are well prepared for their economic well-being due to: a good range of opportunities to take responsibility, effective links with high schools, above average standards in literacy and numeracy, and many enterprise activities with local businesses.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, partly because relationships between adults and pupils and attitudes to learning are good in all lessons. In most lessons, pupils understand what they need to learn and are set interesting tasks, which they enjoy. In these lessons, because teachers have a very clear understanding of what pupils have achieved and the areas in which they need to improve, their lessons are very well planned so that learners of all abilities are given different tasks and so all are well challenged and make good progress. Learners with particular gaps in their understanding are rapidly identified and underachievement is dealt with. Teaching in Year 1 and 2 is good generally, despite the occasions when brief answers are accepted without pupils being encouraged to develop their speaking and reasoning further. However, measures recently put in place to improve opportunities for speaking so that standards in writing are raised are now increasing the proportion of pupils making quicker progress. There is more work to do, but teaching is becoming more adept in this respect.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The significant improvements made to the curriculum recently have been a major contributor to the rise in standards. The provision for writing lacks depth in some parts of the school, but this relative weakness is being tackled well. Teachers have collaborated effectively to ensure that different subjects have common themes and this is improving the opportunities for pupils to write and explore language in greater depth across different lessons. Teachers' planning of these lessons is a strength and this ensures that more lessons are based on themes that pupils enjoy and this is increasing their motivation. For example, pupils really enjoyed a sequence of mathematics and writing lessons both based around pirates, a topic which engaged and interested them. Lessons are enriched through links with business. For example, estate agents visited numeracy lessons and managers from a local bakery joined in food lessons. Computers are used to add variety and interest to enliven teaching through animations and games and also to extend opportunities for pupils to explore global issues and other cultures. The curriculum is regularly adapted for small group work for pupils who find learning difficult. A wide range of extra-curricular activities and trips are well attended and pupils with sporting, musical, dance and other talents are given good opportunities to participate in local events. Pupils' personal and physical development is well promoted through a wide range of sporting activities: for example, all pupils have swimming lessons.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support provided is outstanding. The school cares exceptionally well for all pupils but the most vulnerable receive outstanding support from both adults in school and a highly effective range of external agencies. Consequently, pupils grow in confidence and achieve well. The school meets all the current requirements for safeguarding pupils. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure, and say there is always someone to turn to if they have any problems. Parents are given high quality information about their children's development and encouraged to become partners in the learning process. Procedures for promoting good attendance are extremely rigorous and, as a result, attendance, while average in relation to national statistics, is higher than for most comparable schools. Pupils are well informed about their progress, including that in writing, through the very good marking of their work, which also shows them how they can improve. The school has developed comprehensive systems for setting challenging targets. Teachers have highly effective systems for identifying where targets are not met and are skilful in adapting lessons and planning activities with teaching assistants to bring pupils back on track. This is one of the most significant reasons why academic progress is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's clear vision for a caring and inclusive school focused on raising standards is central to the school's success and supported by all staff. Committed and able senior and middle leaders collaborate as an effective team to ensure that teachers and pupils have all the support they need and, as a result, pupils of all abilities and aptitudes make good progress by the time they leave school. There is a good commitment to equality of opportunity for all pupils and ensuring all forms of discrimination and barriers to learning are eliminated, and this is seen in the way that pupils and adults embrace diversity and individuality. Through its inclusive approach, local and international links and promotion of understanding of global issues, the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. However, leaders understand the need to provide pupils with further opportunities to engage with groups from different ethnic and economic backgrounds and have already established how this is going to be done. Leaders are clear as to the areas needing improvement, for example, writing. There are some signs of success but it is too soon to see the full effect of the initiatives implemented. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and needs and have contributed to the school's success by providing good support and challenge. The local community holds the school in high regard and parents are almost unanimous in their support for the quality of the leadership, management, teaching and quality of care provided.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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?	1

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

I am writing on behalf of the inspectors who visited your school recently. We greatly enjoyed meeting you. Thank you for the extremely warm welcome you gave us. I was pleased to see the way you understand the importance of looking after the environment and impressed by the Eco Award you have received for this work.

I have judged that your school is a good school and improving. I found that it does some things outstandingly well, for example, in the way it looks after you and cares for you. I also found that most of the time you are taught well and as a result you achieve above average standards by the time you leave. Your teachers also work hard to make sure your lessons are enjoyable.

I have asked the staff to think about how they can help the under fives become better at writing.

I have also asked staff teaching in Years 1 and 2 to make lessons better, by getting you to talk about and discuss your ideas more.

All the best for the future!