

Lancaster Ryelands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119132
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326950
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Gordon Potter

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	362
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 Peter Rivet
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Myers
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Torrisholme Road Lancaster Lancashire LA1 2RJ
Telephone number	01524 64626

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ryelands is a larger than average primary school which serves an area of significant social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who are learning English as an additional language, is well below average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average, including a significant number with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Children enter the Reception classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the autumn term. The school incorporated the adjoining Nursery in January 2008. The school has the Healthy Schools Award and the Green Partnership Sustainability Award.

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 and improving school which is justly proud of its inclusive nature and its role as a beacon at the heart of the community. It has excellent relationships with parents and outside agencies which helps many pupils to overcome their barriers to learning. The drive to improve the learning experiences of pupils has resulted in improved standards while maintaining the school's extremely effective focus on care and support. As one parent said, 'The school is part of an extended family that really does care about the education and welfare of all the children. My child comes home full of the day's learning and play.'

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers engage pupils in a range of interesting independent and group work activities and they make it clear to pupils what they are to learn. The curriculum is satisfactory. It is based on the development of literacy and numeracy skills which help pupils to make good progress and to achieve broadly average standards. It is enhanced by an impressive range of activities and visits which excite pupils and encourage them to explore new experiences. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply and extend their writing skills across the curriculum.

Pupils make good progress in their time in school. They start in Year 1 with below average standards and leave at the end of Year 6 with standards that are broadly average. Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. By the end of Year 2, standards, although improving, remain slightly below average. In Key Stage 2 progress continues at a good rate. Results of national tests in 2007 showed pupils had moved on well and attained broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement. Inspection evidence shows that standards are currently broadly average. Pupils in all classes are making increasingly good progress in mathematics and science but satisfactory progress in writing, where standards remain below average.

Outstanding care and support promote pupils' good personal development and well-being. Academic guidance is good. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that there is a range of interesting activities. However, some inconsistencies in the understanding of standards mean that work is not always well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Behaviour and attitudes are good and pupils show friendliness and concern for one another. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their improving attendance. They readily take on responsibilities, such as listening partners and being school council members. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay fit. Pupils develop satisfactory life skills as they move through the school because of the varied experiences they receive.

Leadership and management are good. The highly respected headteacher has established a leadership team which shares her clear vision of school improvement. Well-focused and appropriate initiatives have had an impact on improving provision in school and in raising academic standards. There is good teamwork and the headteacher encourages all teachers and the team of teaching assistants to develop their leadership roles. There is good understanding of the school's many strengths and clear development planning to ensure that any weaknesses are addressed. This has ensured improvement for the school, especially in the raising of standards. It therefore offers good value for money and has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery and Reception with a range of basic skills that are well below what is typical for their age. There are good procedures for introducing children to school and they settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on developing children's personal and social skills and they develop a good attitude to school from an early age. This is supported by outstanding systems of care which are conducted in close partnership with many external agencies. Good leadership and management ensures that effective planning and teaching helps children make good progress and develop well. Rigorous assessment procedures are used effectively to identify and address specific needs at an early stage and to build on what children can do. Consequently, children make good progress although standards remain below average by the time they enter Year 1. Staff take opportunities to talk to children and encourage them to develop their spoken language skills. Activities to develop numeracy and writing skills are key features at the start of every day and fully engage children. Inventive outdoor facilities support interesting learning activities for Reception children and encourage independent and creative learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by providing more opportunities to apply and extend skills across the curriculum.
- Improve teachers' understanding of the assessment of standards so that pupils' work is more closely matched to the needs of individual learners.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average and achievement is good. Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are well below those typical for their age. Despite making good progress standards remain below average when they enter Year 1. In Years 1 and 2 good progress continues and standards are rising and getting closer to the national average by the end of Key Stage 1. Results of the national tests in 2007 for Year 6 continued the trend of improving standards since 2004 and were broadly in line with national averages. School data and inspection evidence indicate that standards are currently broadly average and that pupils are making more progress than in previous years. However, standards in English, especially writing, remain relatively weak. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers as a result of the very effective intervention to meet their learning needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and are well behaved in lessons and around school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Pupils' awareness of the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures in wider British society is satisfactory. Pupils say they really enjoy school and this is reflected in improving attendance, which is currently satisfactory. A range of external accreditation and awards shows the high quality of personal development in sport and health. Pupils develop skills that promote a satisfactory level of economic well-being. Their good computer skills and personal skills prepare them well for the future but they are

less confident in their writing skills. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school community through the elected school council and as listening partners. They are well aware of environmental issues and all pupils contribute positively to growing and harvesting produce in the school garden. They understand the choices needed to stay healthy and safe. Pupils say they feel safe in school; bullying is rare and if it occurs it is dealt with effectively. Pupils say they are safe from unsuitable internet sites through an effective filtering system.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and enable pupils to achieve well. All staff have a good rapport with pupils and provide a positive atmosphere for learning. Relationships are good and staff manage behaviour well so that there are few interruptions to learning. Pupils enjoy lessons which allow them to work collaboratively and include the use of modern technology. They achieve well when teachers' good questioning tests and increases their understanding. Most lessons are conducted at a good pace, ensuring that a suitable challenge is sustained in line with teachers' high expectations. Teachers plan lessons carefully so that there is a range of interesting activities. However, some inconsistencies in the understanding of standards mean that work is not always well matched to the needs of individual pupils. Expert support and guidance is given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and it enables them to make equally good progress as their peers.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is a strong focus on literacy and numeracy and extra help for pupils who find learning difficult. There is a deliberate emphasis on developing defined skills through the teaching of discrete subjects. For example, pupils' investigation and experimental skills are developed in science lessons and this has helped to raise standards. However, pupils are not offered sufficient opportunities to write at length in subjects across the curriculum so that standards in writing remain low. Enrichment activities, which involve external visitors such as poets and puppet theatres, support the development of creativity and speaking and listening skills. A strong programme of personal, social and health education contributes to pupils' good personal development. An extensive programme of extra-curricular activities, including a choir and a variety of sporting activities, are attended enthusiastically by many pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good overall. Care and support for pupils is outstanding. There are outstanding relationships with the many outside agencies which help the school to support a wide range of diverse needs. Pupils who find learning difficult, and those who are vulnerable, are well supported so that they make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils are challenged appropriately in most areas of learning. Learning mentors are especially skilled in calming those pupils who have difficulty managing their own behaviour. The school also offers a source of respite and advice for parents so that they can better support their children. Such initiatives contribute to overcoming the barriers to learning that some

pupils have. Robust arrangements for health and safety and safeguarding children are in place and meet national guidelines. Marking is regular and up-to-date. However, it does not consistently give pupils detailed information on exactly how to improve their work. The school has firmly embedded a system of monitoring each pupil's progress and this has helped to raise standards. Strong links with local high schools ensure that transition is smooth between the stages of education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The skilful leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by the senior management team, has ensured a clear and successful focus on raising standards and ensuring good levels of inclusion. Together with the excellent care and support for pupils, this means that the school's overall effectiveness is good. Well established processes for monitoring and review, result in a school that knows itself well and plans accordingly to ensure continued improvement. Staff thrive on the responsibility and accountability they are offered. The setting of challenging targets has ensured that standards have risen. The school is committed to promoting community cohesion and does so satisfactorily. There is very impressive commitment to developing cohesion within the school and the local community, but strategies for broadening pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider community are in the early stages of development. The governing body offers good support and challenge to the school so that it can help to raise the aspirations of the pupils and parents. Accordingly, parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and the way it cares for the social, personal and academic needs of their children.

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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?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/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	3

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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lancaster Ryelands Primary School, Lancashire, LA1 2RJ

On behalf of the team, thank you so much for making my colleague and me welcome when we inspected your school. Lancaster Ryelands Primary School is a good and improving school. The staff care for you extremely well. They help you to enjoy your learning because they try to make your lessons fun and arrange many exciting activities for you to do. They encourage you to know what you need to learn in each lesson.

We were pleased to see that you work hard and do your best. You come to school on time and care for one another in the playground. We think that you behave well and you look after one another. You are very polite and helpful and we enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us that you look forward to coming to school because you enjoy your lessons and that you like your teachers. You said you appreciated the activities the school provides for you, such as the clubs and sporting activities. Your parents and carers like the school very much, especially the way in which your teachers care for you and help you to enjoy your learning.

We have asked your teachers to do two things to make your school even better.

- Give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills in all subjects.
- Make sure that your work is consistently matched to your abilities.

You can help by continuing to do your very best – as I am sure you will.

Thank you for all your help and I wish you every success in all you do in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Potter

Lead inspector