

Northern Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 119190 |
| Local Authority | Lancashire |
| Inspection number | 326965 |
| Inspection dates | 26–27 February 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Eric Jackson |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 181 |
| 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 | Mrs Deborah Scott |
| Headteacher | Mrs Felicity Simpson |
| Date of previous school inspection | 8 December 2005 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Burnley Road Bacup Lancashire OL13 8PY |
| Telephone number | 01706 874154 |
| Fax number | 01706 879648 |

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|--------------------------|---------------------|
| Age group | 4–11 |
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school serving an area with some pockets of deprivation. Most pupils are White British with a small but growing proportion of pupils of Chinese or mixed heritage. A small percentage of pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than in most primary schools. A lower than average percentage of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but an above average percentage have a statement of their special educational need. These needs include hearing, and speech and language difficulties. At the local authority's request, the headteacher spent the autumn term as temporary headteacher at another local school, and is currently spending two days per week there as associate headteacher. Before and after-school care is provided, and has been inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school has improved well and now provides a good quality education for its pupils. All required safeguarding and child protection measures are in place. Impressive use is made of an old, cramped building that has been significantly revamped to maximise pupils' learning. The majority of parents support the school strongly, summarised by one who wrote, 'My favourite thing about the school is its warmth. It is a happy environment in which children can learn.' Pupils say that they are safe, happy and enjoy their lessons. Inspection evidence confirms these views. A few parents expressed their concerns that the transfer of the headteacher to another school for a term affected this school adversely. The inspection explored this issue and found that some monitoring and evaluation of the school's work had been delayed. However, with her return to three days weekly here, all is running efficiently and effectively.

Pupils achieve well, including those needing extra help to learn English as an additional language. Children enter school with skills typical for their age and leave with above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of their special educational need, make good progress also because they are well supported. Results of national assessments are generally above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and the current Year 2 and Year 6 are on track to maintain these good levels. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and set challenging targets. Pupils' personal development and well-being are also good, as is their attendance. Pupils have taken on the school's messages about living healthy lifestyles well, as is shown by the achievement of the national and local authority Healthy Schools awards. Pupils' involvement in sport and other physical activities is good, despite the school's limited facilities, leading to the award of the national Activemark.

Teaching, learning and the curriculum are good, ensuring that pupils develop strong literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT) and social skills that equip them well for the next stage of their learning. They also make good progress overall in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, pupils are not always expected to take on as much responsibility for aspects of their own learning as they are capable of. For example, whilst the school is developing new assessment systems that involve pupils in understanding their own progress, this encouragement is not consistent between classes. The staff plan lessons effectively and some are outstanding. Pupils are cared for thoroughly and guided to look after themselves and one another. Academic support and guidance are generally good and pupils follow set learning objectives and targets.

Leadership and management are good. The school runs smoothly day-to-day and all required systems are in place. Community cohesion is satisfactory. The autumn term was challenging as the headteacher took over another school temporarily. Governors accepted the local authority's request to help out as it provided opportunities for development for the members of staff concerned. This has highlighted the need to involve all key leaders more effectively in whole-school monitoring and evaluation and development planning. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection and the school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children begin the Reception year with skills and abilities that are broadly typical for their age. They settle well, learn the routines of the setting quickly and make good progress, particularly

in their personal and social development and communication skills. The majority of children reach the expected level and many of them enter Year 1 with levels above those expected for their age. This is due to the staff's good teaching based in planning that meets children's individual needs. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported, a parent saying 'my child has special support needs and I feel that the staff are constantly working with me to help him make progress.' Children have good opportunities to initiate their own learning, such as listing ingredients to make pancakes or when playing in the 'castle'. However, staff miss some opportunities to prompt and challenge children to extend their play, such as when they build with bricks. Children are well behaved, keen to learn and enjoy their learning because they have good relationships with the staff. The setting is safe, well led and managed and the children's welfare and care needs are met well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, but access to continuous outdoor learning is still too restricted, due in part to the limitations of the building.

What the school should do to improve further

- Involve pupils more consistently in understanding their own progress so that they can share in and strive for increasingly challenging learning targets.
- Involve all key leaders more effectively in whole-school planning to drive forward improvements to raise standards and the overall quality of education.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average, especially in reading and mathematics, and pupils' achievement is good. Results of national assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 confirm these standards and are above average. The unvalidated national data for 2008 Year 6 writing results are well above average at the expected Level 4, and broadly in line at the higher Level 5. The school has identified that some potential high attainers did not reach high enough levels, including also some girls in Year 2, and has instigated a number of measures to improve this situation. Year 5 and 6 pupils identified as potentially high attainers are involved in a local authority project to accelerate their progress. There are early signs that these initiatives are having a good impact across the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and behave sensibly in lessons, the dining hall and the playground. They show good knowledge of safe practices and are aware of potential dangers when using the school's narrow and steep staircases. They enjoy healthy lifestyles and take a full part in the many sporting opportunities in after-school clubs, through the School Sports Partnership and links with Burnley Football Club. They also take responsibilities in the school seriously, as school councillors or in caring for each other when at play through the 'Bully Busters' scheme. Pupils' good contribution to the school community extends to local activities such as supporting a local art workshop, Pennine Groundwork Trust and a local young savers' scheme. The 'NOSH' before and after-school club is also well regarded by parents and pupils. Attendance is good and pupils develop their spiritual, moral and social understanding well. Cultural development is satisfactorily promoted through the curriculum, assemblies and visits. Pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society is not as well developed but is being extended through links

with a school that has a more diverse population. They are well prepared overall for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, leading to good progress in pupils' learning. It ranges from being satisfactory to outstanding occasionally, with the majority of lessons being good. Where teaching is outstanding the pupils are challenged to think and express their opinions and develop their own ideas. In one lesson, the teacher allowed three pupils to dispute a mathematical point successfully, with the rest of the class attentively joining in. Pupils say that they enjoy their lessons and they behave well and have good attitudes to learning. Teachers' marking is generally helpful and thorough assessment is used to set new targets and plan to meet individual needs. In the best lessons the pupils are involved in their own assessment and are able to work towards their targets but this practice is not yet consistent across the school. Support staff are deployed effectively and provide good help to enable groups and individuals to achieve the set tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is enriched well by a wide range of well supported extension activities. There is a good concentration on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, with supportive use of ICT. The staff have good subject knowledge between them, and use their specialist skills well in their teaching. For example, French is taught to a good standard and sporting activity is of high quality. All pupils have full access to the learning opportunities provided and this also supports their personal development well. Good use is made of the locality and the staff are already planning a rich celebration of the school's centenary involving cross-curricular projects. There are good opportunities to develop musical skills through the 'Wider Opportunities' music project. All pupils in Year 4 learn to play the clarinet, with the option to continue into Year 5.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

This aspect is good and pastoral care is particularly strong, recognised by most parents. All safeguarding and child protection measures are in place and there is good regard to children's health and safety. Staff pay good attention to pupils' personal needs so that they feel valued. Typically, pupils say, 'There is always someone to talk to if you have a problem.' Academic guidance is also good and there are regular meetings with parents to share with them their children's targets for improvement. Pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given good support. For example, the school hall has been fitted with large sound baffles to minimise echoes and help those with hearing impairment. Gifted and talented pupils are identified and there are new measures in place to challenge their learning. Staff assess children's progress and achievement in all subjects, not just the core, and marking is generally helpful. A new system for assessment of learning has been adopted, but this does not yet involve the pupils consistently in understanding how they might improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good and the school has improved well since its last inspection. Staff work together effectively to promote health and safety, good achievement and pupils' personal development and well-being. Self-evaluation is accurate and shows a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Governance is good and governors are monitoring the current management arrangements carefully for their impact on the pupils. Despite the headteacher being seconded to another school for a full term, the school's systems ran effectively in the main, under the care of the deputy headteacher. Aspects of the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work that were delayed are now on track. However, it is clear that subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in planning and evaluating whole school issues. The school ensures that all pupils are included in the opportunities available and has planned how pupils with impaired mobility could access most of its facilities if required. The school has satisfactory regard to community cohesion. Pupils are made aware of the variety of socio-economic, ethnic and cultural influences locally and nationally and an international perspective is gained through links with Ghana and Kenya. Through assemblies, religious education, geography and history lessons, pupils learn about different cultures and the main tenets of different faiths, including Christianity, Islam and Judaism. However, the school has recognised the need to extend pupils' understanding of the diversity of faiths and cultures in Britain and has planned to forge links with pupils in a school in an area of greater diversity to assist in this. The school has developed a good reputation locally, and has good capacity to continue to improve.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| 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

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| 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| 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? | 2 |
| How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed? | 2 |

Achievement and standards

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|--|---|
| 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

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|---|---|
| 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 | 2 |
| 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

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|--|---|
| 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? | 2 |

Leadership and management

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| 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**

2 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Northern Primary School, Lancashire, OL13 8PY

It was good to meet you in your school, and to find out what you think of it and how well it helps you to grow and learn. You and your parents mostly told us that it is a good school that cares for you well, and promotes good standards. (Please thank your parents for sending back the questionnaires.)

We agree with you and most of your parents. Yours is a good school. The staff make sure that you are safe, care for you well, and help you achieve good standards. You behave well, and have good attitudes to school. We liked the way you look out for each other, and were impressed by your 'Bully Busters' system.

You join in lessons well, and usually know what you are expected to learn. The staff mark your work carefully, but we think that you could be more involved in checking how good your work and that of your friends is.

You also told us how much you enjoy the extra activities provided, such as the History Man's visits, playing in the castle, playing the clarinet, sports and learning French. They are also planning, amongst other exciting things, to help you learn more about all the different traditions and ideas from around the world that have affected what it is like to live in the United Kingdom.

We know that the staff are planning to involve you more in assessing your own work and understanding what you need to do next to improve. We want also more of your teachers to be involved in planning improvements at the school.

You can help by discussing your work with the staff and your friends and by trying to find out about the rich history of Britain, and the variety of ways of life in different parts of the country.

Yours faithfully

Eric Jackson

Lead inspector