

Ribbleton Avenue Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119235
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326979
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jennie Platt

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	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	177
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 Stephen Niven
Headteacher	Mrs Sarah List
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ribbleton Avenue Preston Lancashire PR1 5RU
Telephone number	01772 796037
Fax number	01772 796037

Age group	3–7
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Inspection number	326979

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average size infant school. It serves an area which is socially and economically disadvantaged. A well above average proportion of pupils are entitled to a free school meal. The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds and the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is high. Many of these pupils start school with limited ability in speaking English. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) providing education for 48 children in the Nursery and 66 children in the Reception classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school which provides excellent value for money. It is a school which is truly at the heart of the community. It embraces the richness of diversity in the locality and has an excellent reputation with parents. Responses to the parent questionnaires were unanimous in their praise of the school. One parent commented that, 'This is an excellent school. Our family's children have attended this school for generations and hopefully generations to come.'

This is a happy and thriving school and pupils thoroughly enjoy every minute they are in school. Their personal development is excellent and children are enthusiastic and friendly. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are very keen to take on responsibilities to contribute to their school community. The excellent quality of care underpins the supportive ethos that is such an important feature of the school. Staff go that extra mile to comfort and explain, especially to those pupils with little spoken English. This enables pupils to relax and fully benefit from all that is on offer. It is not surprising that pupils feel safe and have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

The combination of inspirational teaching and a very enriching and creative curriculum mean that achievement is excellent. From a very low starting point pupils make excellent progress. By the end of Year 2 standards are average in reading and mathematics but slightly below in writing. The school has given good attention to encouraging pupils to express their ideas in writing and many do this well. Their skills in spelling, punctuation and sentence structure are less well developed. Teaching captures pupils' interest because lessons include a variety of activities that are targeted well to their ability and interests. In the excellent lessons seen the teachers' enthusiasm and challenge gave pupils the essential boost they need to be successful in their work. Excellent relationships between staff and pupils lead to confident pupils who are willing to have a go. There is always a good show of hands to answer teachers' questions. Learning is enhanced by the imaginative curriculum. Staff are very aware that some pupils have limited experience of life beyond home and set out to overcome this barrier to their learning. Every day brings new ideas which capture the pupils' enthusiasm and extends their horizons. It provides a wealth of richness including visits and visitors that stimulate pupils so that whatever their ability, they are able to be involved and enjoy learning. Pupils leave the school exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Leadership and management are excellent. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a formidable team with a determination to provide only the best for the pupils. Yet they are approachable and parents express their pleasure in staff that are readily available and willing to listen to their concerns. There is no complacency in the school and all staff have a shared vision for the future. The school knows itself well and has clear actions to move the school forward. Governance is good and governors are supportive of the school. Improvement since the last inspection is excellent especially in the rise in standards. The school is in an exceptionally good position to improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities much lower than usually seen for their age. Outstanding teaching, especially in the Reception classes, enables the children to make excellent progress. Standards are rising and over the last two years have been in line with what is expected

for this age when the children start in Year 1. This is an amazing achievement considering the barriers to their learning that many children have to overcome. Not least of these being their limited social and language skills. Teachers have a thorough understanding of the needs of children of this age. They are adept at knowing when to encourage having a go and when to step in and offer help. As a result, children's independent skills increase rapidly. Despite it being early in the school year, children already know the school routines, for example, they are quick to respond to the signal to tidy away. Resources are prepared well and usually of good quality, although some furniture in the role play corner is old and does not encourage imaginative play. It was good to see in the Nursery the crowd around the new microwave oven to see what had been cooking. Every day is interesting because of the rich curriculum and this leads to children enjoying lessons. One parent summed up her delight as, 'I know for sure he is coming home knowing something new every day, also, he enjoys going to bed knowing he is going to school.' Bi-lingual support is readily available in the Nursery and this very effectively provides children with the skills to play a full part in all that is happening. Leadership and management are excellent. The school gives careful attention to new changes and welfare procedures are in place. A detailed action plan is in place to improve provision even more. This correctly identifies the need to improve outdoor provision. The lack of specially designated outdoor space for Reception children reduces opportunities for learning, despite the way that the school compensates for this by using the playground and hall. The outdoor Nursery area lacks stimulation. Nevertheless, the children leave the EYFS very well prepared for Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Give more attention to pupils' skills in structuring sentences and in the use of punctuation.
- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the EYFS.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is excellent. From starting in the Nursery with skills and understanding that are considerably lower than is typical for their age children make outstanding progress to reach the level expected of them by the end of Year 2. They leave Reception very close to the level expected for their age. This firm foundation is extended in Years 1 and 2 with a picture of rising standards. National assessments at the end of Year 2 have been on an upward trend except for in 2007 when 50% of the pupils were assessed as having learning difficulties. Current standards show the majority of pupils are now working at the level expected for their age. Although pupils make good progress in writing and confidently use their skills to write in a variety of ways, including short stories, they are less secure in writing in sentences and the use of punctuation.

Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are justified in their praise of the quick identification of their children's difficulties and provision of extra help. This is also the case for pupils whose first language is not English who often benefit from bi-lingual support. Consequently, these pupils make excellent progress as they move through school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Enjoyment is at the heart of the school and clearly seen as pupils arrive happily every day. They love coming to school to work and play. Attendance figures are close to average but these do not give a real picture of the regular attendance of many pupils. Overall figures are affected by absences for the celebrations of different cultural festivals and extended visits to distant

relatives. These young pupils have an excellent understanding about how to keep safe and secure. They feel sure friendly help is at hand if needed because of the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils. The pupils look after each other well and have very caring attitudes, one pupil said, 'If you feel sad at break time you just sit on the friendship bench and then everyone is your friend'.

Behaviour is excellent both in and out of lessons. This is closely linked to the school's system which is designed to be easily understood by pupils of this age. It is a delight to see a child's pleasure when selected to wear the cloak of a super hero as a reward for their efforts. The school has achieved the National Healthy Schools Award and this is reflected in the pupils' excellent understanding of healthy life styles. They make healthy food choices at lunchtime and in dance Year 1 pupils exercise hard to, 'make our hearts beat faster and keep us fit'. From starting school pupils learn to accept responsibility for their role in the school community. They quickly learn to tidy away and to carry out small duties.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. In the whole school act of worship pupils come together regardless of their faith or background to reflect and pray in their own way. Many have limited experiences of nature and the wonderful wildlife garden gives pupils space to observe nature more closely. Cultural development is outstanding. The school really celebrates the diverse cultures in school so that pupils grow in understanding of valuing the beliefs of others. Pupils' secure foundation in basic skills and their excellent progress in personal development leads to them being extremely well prepared for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The consistently good and often outstanding quality of teaching and learning contributes significantly to pupils' excellent achievements. Lessons are well ordered and purposeful. A principle strength in the teaching lies in the excellent relationships between pupils and staff. Adults always take time to value pupils' opinions so that they are eager to contribute to all activities. Teaching assistants and other support workers forge very effective partnerships with teachers and make a considerable contribution to pupils' learning. This was very effective in the outstanding teaching seen in Year 1. Very effective organisation was pivotal to success. For example, while one group learned new letters and sounds with the teacher others were involved in the information and communication technology (ICT) suite and the learning mentor led another group writing simple words. The key to the success of this teaching was the very close match of task to ability so that all were suitably challenged and learning was excellent. Throughout the school, a positive feature of the successful teaching is the variety of approaches used, especially in numeracy lessons when games and resources make learning enjoyable. Marking is undertaken regularly and pupils are helped to improve their work with positive comments and guidance.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding in the way it meets the needs and interests of this community. The school accurately describes itself as an inclusive school and provides equally well for all pupils regardless of race, gender, social class or disability. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are promoted effectively in other subjects. Provision for personal and social development is excellent.

Displays of pupils' work show a practical approach that very effectively allows pupils to discuss their feelings and learn to respect each other. Staff recognise that many pupils have a narrow knowledge of the wider world and respond with imaginative and inspiring ideas that set the pupils on a path of discovery to learn more about themselves and extend their horizons. This is clearly seen in the afternoon when staff combine different subjects so that activities are purposeful, creative and varied. Many visits add richness to the pupils' experiences and promote enjoyment as well as contributing to pupils' excellent achievement. After school sports clubs as well as musical instrument tuition contribute greatly to pupils' learning as well as enriching their daily lives.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an extremely caring school which provides a calm and welcoming atmosphere for pupils to learn. The school's determination to provide the best care possible is demonstrated by their efforts to gain the Nurture Quality Mark. Excellent partnerships with outside agencies result in staff being fully prepared to meet the special needs of their pupils. Regular visitors, such as the play therapist and school nurse, provide additional support when required. The school has established very strong community links especially with parents. A family care worker works alongside the learning mentor to support pupils and their families and parents are grateful for this help. All statutory safeguarding and welfare procedures are in place. The school recognises that pupils' attendance still requires careful monitoring and has in place many strategies to encourage attendance.

Academic guidance is excellent. Pupils' progress is closely tracked and reviewed termly. Support, in the shape of additional individual or group work, is promptly put in place when it becomes clear a pupil is not making enough progress. These procedures have a positive impact on raising standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher is an excellent leader. She knows the pupils and families very well because she is readily available around school. This approachability is also seen in other staff as they greet parents as pupils arrive. Their friendly enquiry about the recent Eid celebrations is just one example of how well this school works with its community.

Monitoring by the senior management team and subject leaders is rigorous and the school has identified the correct priorities to raise standards. The school's improvement plan is not a useful vehicle to bring about the required change because it is too long and lacks a clear focus on the most important issues. In practice staff work together informally and at staff meetings to adjust practice and effectively bring about improvement. This ensures self-evaluation has a positive impact on standards. The governing body is representative of the diverse community it serves and carries out an effective role especially in ensuring the school provides equally well for all pupils. Governors are very supportive and have effective links with each class, which keeps them well informed. The strength in leadership and management is team work. All have collaborated over the school's new mission statement that includes the principle that 'we offer every child a happy and caring place to play and learn'. This is reflected in daily practice by staff who truly care and effectively change the lives of pupils and their families.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

3 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ribbleton Avenue Infant School, Lancashire, PR1 5RU

Thank you very much for the wonderful time we had when we visited your school. It was lovely to see how happy you are and how much you enjoy school. You go to an outstanding school and make excellent progress in your lessons. This is because your teachers are outstanding and you listen carefully to them and try your very best. Your behaviour is wonderful and it was a pleasure to watch you as you play happily together. You are very well looked after in school and we were pleased to see how you help each other and are kind when someone hurts themselves. You know how important it is to keep fit and we saw you being very energetic as well as choosing to eat healthy food. Your headteacher and all of the people who run your school keep everyone busy and know exactly what the school needs to do to get even better.

There are two things we have asked the school to do:

- to help you to do better in writing especially in remembering to write in sentences and use capital letters and full stops
- to improve the outdoor space available for the young children in the Nursery and Reception classes.

For you, the most important things are to carry on enjoying school and doing your very best.

We wish you every happiness for the future!

Yours sincerely

Jennie Platt

Lead inspector