

Queensbridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133925
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	328767
Inspection dates	17–18 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Stephen Wall

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)	248
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 G Firth
Headteacher	Miss Sheila Holland
Date of previous school inspection	15 February 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	St Germain Street Farnworth Bolton Lancashire BL4 7BL
Telephone number	01204 332577
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school in an urban area of challenging social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average. About a quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Pakistani. About one in five pupils has English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is well above average. The school is a designated inclusive school taking in about eight children with profound and multiple learning difficulties. There have been several changes to staffing in the past year following the departure of teachers to promoted posts in other schools. A new deputy headteacher joined the school in January this year. The school has gained the Basic Skills, Nurturing, Activemark and Healthy Schools Awards.

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 in which pupils achieve well and develop into confident, caring and happy individuals. It is a very harmonious community in which every pupil is valued equally regardless of background, ability or disability. The school sets great store by traditional virtues such as good manners and respect. As a result, its pupils are unfailingly polite, welcoming and self-assured. Parents value the school highly. 'My children love going to school. I'd recommend Queensbridge to any parent', is a typical comment. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and gives good value for money.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainments well below those normally expected for their age group, especially in communication and language skills. They make good progress at all stages to attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. They achieve well because teaching is never less than satisfactory and most is good or better. Teachers check on pupils' progress effectively. Pupils know their targets and what they need to do to attain them. However, some teaching does not make effective use of information on pupils' targets to set tasks matched closely enough to their needs. As a result, pupils find some of the work they are asked to do either too easy or too difficult in a few lessons. The good curriculum adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Teachers use topic work and school trips creatively to make learning relevant and exciting. For example, visits to the Houses of Parliament and contacts with Members of Parliament not only broaden pupils' horizons but provide valuable stimulus to extend pupils' writing skills in the classroom.

Pupils enjoy school. They say how well cared for they are and how safe they feel in school. Overall, attendance is satisfactory. Most pupils attend regularly. However, a small number of pupils are persistently absent. The school is tackling this persistent absence with renewed vigour. There are some early signs that this is having the desired effect but the school accepts that there is much more to do to win over some parents and carers who condone lengthy absences. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school. They enjoy taking on responsibilities such as becoming prefects. They value the active school council which gives them a real say in improving the school. By the time they leave, pupils have developed into inquisitive and confident young people who are well prepared to take advantage of the next stages in their education.

Good leadership and management provide the school with a clear focus on improvement. The strong leadership of the headteacher and strong teamwork across the school have enabled the school to cope seamlessly with significant staffing changes this year. Astute appointments have been made which are maintaining the school's quest for improvement, adding to the school's quality of teaching and learning and providing strong support for its core values of caring and including all pupils. This means that the school has good capacity to build on and extend its strong performance.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainments well below those normally expected for their age. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress and achieve well. By the end of the Reception class most children are at or just below the expected levels. Children make very good progress in developing their communication skills because this is a strong focus

in teaching and learning. Children enjoy the broad range of learning activities which are planned meticulously to meet their needs and support their development. This includes outdoor provision which is, at present, undergoing significant improvement to provide covered all weather access to outdoors learning. Children's progress is monitored effectively. The outcomes are used to make sure activities meet their needs and to identify children with specific barriers to learning so that the services of outside agencies can be called upon early. Children are well cared for. They learn and play in a well ordered and attractive environment. They learn to understand how important healthy lifestyles are, especially healthy eating. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. They make sure that there is a strong focus on children's learning while making sure that they have a fulfilling and enjoyable start to school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure that teaching is consistently matched to the needs and abilities of pupils.
- Reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and achieve well from starting points that are well below average overall. By the end of Year 2, standards are consistently broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2008, however, standards dipped significantly because the cohort contained a very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. End of key stage assessments in reading, writing and mathematics were well below average as a result. Inspection evidence shows that present standards are much higher and results this year are set to be broadly in line with the 2008 national average figures. Year 6 results in national tests show that pupils continue to make good progress and achieve well in Key Stage 2. Year 6 results have been rising gradually over the last few years. They are broadly average across English, mathematics and science where targets have been met. Inspection evidence confirms that the upward trend is being maintained. All groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is supported effectively by a range of visits to venues such as the local church, a mosque and the Houses of Parliament. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They know the importance of healthy living and can say what foods are good for them and what are best treated with caution. Because pupils feel very well supported by caring staff, they say that they feel safe and secure in school and know what to do if ever there is a problem. Pupils say that adults are always approachable and help them deal promptly with any concerns. Pupils work and play well together. They are at pains to help and support the pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The good progress pupils make in basic skills and their good levels of self-confidence prepare them well for future learning and success.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Where teaching is most effective it is conducted at a fast pace with a sharp focus on learning. Activities are planned to engage pupils' interest and keep them motivated. Lessons are usually challenging because the questions asked and the tasks set for pupils to complete are matched closely to their abilities and their needs. Pupils' enjoyment in these lessons is evident in their eagerness to give answers, share their ideas and in the progress they are making. In a few lessons pupils' progress is slower because the tasks and questions are not pitched consistently at the right level. Pupils either struggle to understand or find work too easy. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support lower attaining pupils or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they are able to make good progress as well. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. Their comments are generally helpful in showing pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broad and designed to meet the needs of all pupils. It provides good provision for pupils' acquisition of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. The school is developing its curriculum to improve pupils' learning by adding extra relevance and enjoyment. For example, the introduction of a whole-school phonetics teaching time is paying dividends in terms of improving pupils' writing, spelling, reading and speaking skills. The introduction of topic work is proving very popular with pupils. For example, the topic of 'Kensuke's Kingdom' in Year 6 has led to linked scientific experiments involving a visit to a local swimming pool to investigate the effectiveness of buoyancy aids and the physics of flotation and displacement. Pupils discussed their results and conclusions in class with barely contained excitement! The good range of enrichment activities is popular with the pupils and adds significantly to their enjoyment and development as rounded young people. Sports, artistic events, trips out and clubs are all well attended.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Attention to health and safety including risk assessments is meticulous. Effective links with outside agencies are firmly established. These ensure that the school is able to call readily on specialist help for its most vulnerable children when needed. Transition arrangements into the Early Years Foundation Stage are well thought out so that children settle in quickly. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 say that they have been given every help and support for their move to secondary schools. The school is working hard to improve the attendance of a group of pupils who are too frequently absent. Monitoring of attendance is becoming tighter and contact with parents more frequent. Initial signs are encouraging, showing that attendance is improving, especially for those whose are persistently absent. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development is good. Pupils know what is expected of them. Their progress is reviewed regularly. Their parents and carers are informed regularly of their progress and any problems.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, ably supported by other leaders and managers, sets the tone for the school – a place where happiness and learning go hand in hand. Good levels of teamwork make sure that this vision for the school is always the driving force behind its work. There is a comprehensive system for evaluating the school's effectiveness involving the opinions of a wide range of stakeholders, including parents. As a result, leaders and managers have an accurate view of what the school does well and where it could improve further. The results are translated into effective planning to bring about improvement in the short and medium term. The commitment of leaders and managers to inclusion and equality is outstanding. 'Every Child Matters' is behind everything the school does. The school's impact on community cohesion is good and improving rapidly: pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school; the school is very active in the local community supporting local events such as the Farnworth Festival; pupils' understanding of national issues such as politics is enhanced by the regular visits to the Houses of Parliament and the attendance of Members of Parliament in school; and, pupils' global awareness is growing following the recent introduction of email links with schools as far apart as the United States of America and India. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive of the school. They know it well and hold it to account by asking the right questions at the right time.

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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?	2
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?	2
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	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?	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	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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**

Inspection of Queensbridge Primary School, Bolton, BL4 7BL

Thank you for your warm welcome when two of us came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to many of you. What you said helped us reach our judgements about your school.

You will be pleased to know that you go to a good school which takes very good care of you and helps you do well in your learning. It was a pleasure to see how well you all get on together and how well you behave. You told me how much you enjoy school and I could see this in how happy you are as you go about your work and play. While most of you enjoy coming to school every day, there is a small group of you who are too frequently absent. This means that their progress is limited. So I am asking your school to tackle this problem with even greater determination.

Your teachers go to a lot of time and trouble to make sure your lessons are interesting and to help you enjoy learning. Sometimes, however, the tasks teachers set you are either too difficult or too easy, so I am asking the school to make sure that what you do in lessons is pitched just right for everyone of you.

I was impressed with all the opportunities the school gives you, such as visits to the Houses of Parliament and links with schools abroad. These things help you develop into the interesting and rounded young people we saw during our visit to the school.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure that your school remains as happy and successful in the coming years.