

Bowerham Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119129
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339359
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Sheridan HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	329
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andi Daykin
Headteacher	Mr Tim Allan
Date of previous school inspection	0 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with pupils, staff, governors and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised the school's development plans, assessment and tracking information, school records on accidents and incidents, local authority reports, pupils' work in books and key policy documents. Inspectors analysed 108 parent questionnaires. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work.

It looked in detail at the following aspects.

- The rates of progress in writing across the school for all pupils.
- The effectiveness of teaching in engaging all pupils in their learning.
- The effectiveness of teaching assistants and learning mentors in supporting pupils.
- The impact of leaders, including subject leaders, in raising standards.

Information about the school

Bowerham Primary School is a larger than average school situated to the southern edge of Lancaster City Centre. It is part of the Lancaster Excellence in Cities cluster. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the number of pupils whose first language is not English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below the national average, although the number of children with a statement of special need is average. The school has the Activemark award and Healthy Schools Standard. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a Nursery class and two Reception classes. In one Reception class, children are taught alongside some Year 1 pupils.

There is a breakfast club and after-school club on the school site. This provision is registered separately to the school and is subject to its own inspection.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Most pupils enjoy their learning. They try hard and working diligently in lessons. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and many of the lessons seen by inspectors were good. However, too much teaching remains satisfactory. Because of this variability, learning is uneven and pupils make satisfactory progress overall.

The curriculum is a strength of the school. Pupils respond well to the wide range of interesting and exciting activities provided both within and beyond the school day. The school has implemented clear and helpful policies to support teachers in their work. These include, for example, guidance on the effective use of marking and the management of behaviour. However, these procedures are not implemented consistently in all classes. As a result, the outcomes for pupils are not always as good as they could be.

Leadership has been strengthened by the development of the roles of subject leaders. These leaders have accurately identified and started to address appropriate priorities for development. As a result of their actions, teaching is improving and pupils are beginning to make better progress. This can be seen in the increased amount of good teaching and the improvements in reading and mathematics across the school. Writing, however, remains stubbornly difficult to improve. This is particularly the case for boys.

The school's leaders, including governors, have a good understanding about the strengths and weaknesses and are ambitious for the future. Subject leaders are well placed to continue the school improvement journey. The school has demonstrated satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement through:

- improved rates of progress in mathematics
- some improvement to attainment in writing at Key Stage 1
- an improvement to the quality of teaching since the last inspection
- an improved curriculum which is now good
- improved provision, learning and development for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure good progress in writing for all pupils, particularly boys, by July 2010 through:
 - providing opportunities for teachers to develop their understanding of highly effective practice in the teaching of writing
 - ensuring assessment information is used effectively to pinpoint precise issues

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holding back individuals and groups of pupils

- implementing high quality, targeted intervention quickly and effectively for those pupils which need it.
- Ensure that pupils make good progress in English and mathematics by:
 - sharing the existing good practice to increase the number of good or better lessons
 - setting targets regularly and monitoring pupils' progress so all staff know what level pupils should be working at and set appropriately challenging work
 - training support staff in a variety of appropriate intervention strategies
 - targeting support accurately for individuals and groups who are beginning to underachieve so that they catch up quickly.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils' enjoyment of learning is reflected in their good attitudes. They usually behave well in lessons, although their attention fades when teaching is not appropriately planned to meet the individual needs of pupils. The pace of learning is uneven across the school. Progress is slower for boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, where teaching is good, most notably in upper Key Stage 2, pupils who may have fallen behind generally catch up so that the progress they make over time is satisfactory. Pupils reach average standards of attainment by the time they move on to secondary school. Progress in reading and mathematics is better than in writing. Pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school. They know that adults will help, support and care for them. For example, any incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. Pupils have a good knowledge of how to keep safe, for example, when crossing roads or when using the internet.

While pupils' good behaviour in classes contributes to the calm, purposeful atmosphere in school, a noticeable minority of pupils demonstrate behaviour which is immature and inappropriate when outside. A small number of parents and pupils identified this issue and inspectors agree with their observations. Behaviour improves as pupils move through the school. In upper Key Stage 2, pupils are able to reflect on a variety of issues. They listen carefully and appreciate differences. They articulate mature and considered views on issues of spirituality, moral dilemma and cultural identity.

Pupils enjoy healthy meals in school and participate in a wide range of activities that contribute to their health and emotional well-being. They know what constitutes being healthy and understand the consequences of the decisions they make.

Many pupils hold positions of responsibility and become effective ambassadors for the school as they get older. The school council is active in contributing to decisions about the future of the school and raising money for various causes. Some pupils have the

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opportunity to participate in activities within the local community through, for example, concerts with the school's steel band.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies considerably within the school. When teaching is good, pupils make rapid progress. Pupils are motivated by the interesting work that is planned for them. In these lessons, teachers' marking and assessments are used well to plan the next steps of learning. It is in these lessons that pupils who have underachieved in the past catch up so that they make satisfactory progress overall. However, much of the teaching is satisfactory. In these lessons, teachers plan interesting activities which the majority of pupils enjoy. However, planning in these lessons does not take into account the full range of learners' needs and abilities. Teaching assistants are under-utilised, missing opportunities to meet the needs of groups of pupils who need additional support or challenge. As a result, progress is uneven amongst groups of pupils.

The school has planned a wide range of activities and opportunities to bring the curriculum alive. Pupils regularly enjoy trips and visits that add additional interest to

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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their learning. As a result, most pupils say they enjoy their learning a great deal. The majority of teachers plan activities carefully to capture the imagination of learners. Music is particularly strong and several parents commented appreciatively about this aspect of the provision.

Good links exist with other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are cared for well. Learning mentors and teaching assistants are effective in supporting pupils' pastoral needs. However, support for learning is underdeveloped and does not always lead to adaptations in the classroom to enable these pupils to reach their potential. This is particularly evident in lessons where teaching is less than good. Learning mentors are effective in helping pupils who find concentration difficult, to manage their behaviour in classes.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and governors are ambitious for pupils and are committed to bringing about improvements. The school has worked closely with the local authority to improve standards of teaching. In the majority of classes, this has had a marked impact. The school's evaluation of its performance is honest and accurate. The headteacher leads with determination, correctly identifying priorities for improvement. He has made difficult decisions that have led to satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. There are strategies in place to raise teachers' expectations and pupils' achievement. While these have been successful in many areas, there remain some classes where the pace of improvement is stubbornly slow.

Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust and consistently applied. The school ensures that rigorous risk assessments are carried out for activities in school and away from the school site. There are good partnership arrangements in place to ensure that vulnerable pupils are cared for well.

Effective policies are in place to promote equality of opportunity for pupils and support those in need. Racist incidents are rare and are dealt with quickly and effectively. Leaders have a clear view of the diversity within school and the wider community. Their plans and actions have developed a cohesive school community where pupils are proud of their own identity and celebrate diversity around them.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Effective and focused leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has led to significant improvements in the provision and outcomes for children since the last inspection. Teachers have a good understanding of the strengths and interests of individual children. They use this knowledge to make sure the highly relevant and creative curriculum is adapted to children's individual needs. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of their learning with most reaching or exceeding expectations for their age by the time they leave Reception.

Teaching is consistently good and children enjoy their learning a great deal. The learning environment for Nursery and Reception classes is stimulating, well-organised and secure. The exciting outdoor area supplements the good range of activities and opportunities provided indoors.

There is a good balance between adult-led activities and opportunities for children to learn through their own play. Adult-led activities are effective in teaching particular skills to groups and individuals. Work is adapted well to the ability of individuals. As a result, they learn rapidly and enjoy being successful.

Children enjoy the good range of well designed activities for them to play together. For example, children in the Nursery class enjoyed role playing in their babies' hospital. Through such activities, children develop good social and communication skills. They learn to share, take turns, and use language appropriately. Consequently, children's social development is good.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents who returned questionnaires are happy with most aspects of the school's performance and its relationship with them. Parents were particularly pleased with aspects of the school's music provision, the way that children were valued and the range of after-school activities.

A few parents expressed concerns. These include a lack of preparation for grammar school tests, the poor quality of the playground surface, the variability in teaching and the rates of progress being made by their children. Inspectors found these views to be justified in light of their findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bowerham Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 329 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	52	49	45	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	64	37	34	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	34	63	58	8	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	39	49	45	14	13	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	48	49	45	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	41	53	49	8	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	50	46	52	48	3	3	3	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	25	63	58	5	5	3	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	33	65	60	5	5	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	41	47	43	13	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	36	54	50	6	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	44	55	50	4	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	47	50	46	6	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



5 December 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Bowerham Community Primary School, Bowerham Road, Lancaster, LA1 4BS

As you may remember I recently visited your school with two other inspectors. This letter is to let you know our findings.

Your school is a satisfactory school. We found that you do better in some classes than you do in others. This is because some teachers plan work that is just right for each of you to do well. We found that you do better in reading and mathematics than you do in writing. We have asked your school to improve the way that they teach writing so that you learn these skills more quickly. We have also asked your school to make sure that more of your lessons are good so you always make good progress.

We were very impressed with how you behaved in class. You were polite and well mannered, letting everyone around you work without being disturbed. We were, however, a little worried when some of you told us that behaviour was not always that good. When we visited the big playground we could see why you said that. While we didn't see anyone being naughty, we did see a few pupils playing quite roughly. Other pupils behaved in a silly way while we were trying to talk to some of you. I do hope that you will be able to think about this and try to make your behaviour in the playground as good as we saw in classes.

I would like to finish by saying thank you to all of you. Many of you told us things that were very helpful in making our judgements.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sheridan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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