

Lancaster Ridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119131
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339360
Inspection dates	21–22 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Jennifer Platt

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Philip Hudson
Headteacher	Mrs Sue Fitt
Date of previous school inspection	9 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority and the manager of the Children's Centre. They observed the school's work and looked at teachers' lessons plans, documentation for safeguarding pupils, the analysis of pupils' progress and test results, the school's plans for future developments and a range of policies. In addition, inspectors analysed 28 questionnaires returned by parents, 13 returned by staff and 76 completed by pupils.

- the impact of the school's work on improving pupils' progress, especially for the more able pupils
- the teachers' use of assessment to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met in lessons
- the effectiveness of the modifications to the curriculum
- the provision to ensure that pupils learn about other cultures and traditions
- the capacity of leaders to bring about sustained improvement.

Information about the school

Most pupils attending this average-sized school are White British with very few from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is double the national average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average and the school has a high number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. There is a specialist educational resource facility on site providing education for 10 pupils with statements of need for speech and language. These pupils are fully integrated into the school. The number of pupils leaving and entering the school at times other than the usual times is higher than in most schools. There have been considerable staffing changes, including a new deputy headteacher, since the last inspection. The school holds the Healthy Schools Award and the Sportsmark Award.

A nursery and before- and after-school club are provided in the Firbank Children's Centre which shares the site with the school. This provision is privately managed and has been inspected separately by Ofsted. A report is available on the Ofsted website.

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

This is a satisfactory school with several good features. It is a very caring school and provides many extra activities for pupils who have emotional or learning difficulties. Safeguarding is good and the effective support pupils receive is underpinned by warm relationships between all staff and pupils. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, feel safe and behave well. Parents are supportive and many attended the harvest festival during the inspection and appreciated their children's singing.

As a result of improved assessment, progress from a very low starting point is satisfactory, showing signs of rapid and secure improvement over the last two years, especially in Key Stage 1. Standards are starting to rise with an increase in the number of pupils reaching the level expected for their age. However, standards remain well below average at the end of Year 6. This overall picture is linked to the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the specialist educational resource unit. These pupils are supported very well and make good progress. The school is overcoming the previous underachievement of the more able pupils. More pupils are now working at above average levels but the impact is not yet showing in the results of national tests. A more exciting curriculum is increasing pupils' ability to write imaginatively but their skills in punctuation and grammar are underdeveloped.

Teaching is satisfactory with examples of good and outstanding practice seen. Most teachers use assessment information effectively to match work to pupils' ability but this is not always the case and leads to a few lessons lacking pace and challenge. In mathematics, pupils are not always given sufficiently clear guidance about what they need to do to improve their work. Support staff make a very good contribution to learning because they are well informed about the needs of the pupils they support. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff provide a good variety of activities but it is not always clear how children's choices are monitored to ensure that they access the full range of experiences.

Recent appointments have strengthened the senior management team who work very well together. Better tracking and the improved curriculum are starting to reap benefits especially in pupils' motivation to learn. As yet, these changes have not led to sustained improvement in standards with some concerns raised in the previous inspection remaining. The capacity to improve is satisfactory. However, self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate and the school is now clear about how standards can be raised.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Accelerate progress, especially in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 2, by:
 - - raising expectations among staff of what pupils can do, particularly in the presentation and accuracy of their work in mathematics
 - - ensuring pupils' punctuation and grammar skills are more fully developed.
- Increase the proportion of consistently good teaching across the school by:
 - - using assessment information more effectively to meet the needs of all pupils especially the more able
 - - ensuring the pace and challenge in lessons sustains pupils' interest
 - - develop target setting and marking so that pupils know how to improve
 - - ensure the choices children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage are closely monitored so that they access the full range of experiences.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

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

In most lessons pupils enjoy learning and are eager to extend their knowledge. They collaborate well in groups as seen in a Year 6 lesson when they rose to the challenge to write in the style of a given author. This was a difficult task for some pupils but they persevered and produced some good work. Where teaching is less effective, pupils do not sustain their concentration and do not listen closely to their teachers. Lesson observations indicate the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the carefully planned support. The pupils with statements of special educational needs who are integrated from the specialist educational resource unit do especially well because of they receive specialised guidance. More able pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons and this is accelerating in most classes, although the older pupils have a backlog of underachievement to overcome. This is being resolved with better teaching. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress in acquiring English. The school acts quickly to get help, both from pupils with the same home language and the local authority. Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving rapidly.

Pupils say they feel safe and recall important messages from the Fire Brigade and other visitors. The vast array of trophies on display shows the pupils' success in a wide range of competitive sports and their eagerness to keep fit and healthy. They enjoy being given responsibilities. Year 6 pupils carry out duties very maturely, like helping the infants at play times, and this contributes to the friendly community atmosphere. Contribution to the wider community is satisfactory but less well developed. Although most families ensure that their children attend regularly, a small number of families take their children on holiday during term time. As a result, despite the school's many endeavours, attendance is below average. Pupils demonstrate sound workplace skills that contribute to their future well-being.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils show a good understanding of how to respect and help others. As one pupil explained, 'We have lots

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of friends.' They learn about different faiths and traditions as a result of the school extending their awareness of life in a multi-cultural society.

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	4
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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good use of support staff. This leads to lessons running smoothly because pupils have ready access to help. In most lessons, teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to develop a point and add interest to the lesson. In the best lessons teachers make good use of time, often allocating a set amount of time to complete a task. This leads to pupils working hard. Most lessons include a variety of activities such as role play, drama and partner discussions which help improve communication skills. However, this good practice is not yet consistent throughout the school and across subjects. In a few lessons expectations are not high enough and occasionally tasks do not closely match pupils' ability. Marking in pupils' books is completed regularly and often includes encouragement and advice. Occasionally, it over emphasises the positive and does not insist that pupils do their best, especially in ensuring precision and accuracy of recording in mathematics.

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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Assessment is satisfactory. Approaches to include pupils in their own learning are developing but are not yet fully embedded. Although pupils have targets they do not always understand what they mean and so are unsure how to achieve them.

A robust programme to extend pupils' personal and social skills is integral to the curriculum and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. The move to combining subjects to make learning more interesting is yielding benefits in pupils' enthusiasm for new topics. A good range of visits and visitors enrich the curriculum.

The school's caring ethos contributes positively to increasing pupils' self-esteem and improving their progress. Additional activities, such as the nurture sessions and individual counselling, are indicative of the school's focus on supporting the more vulnerable pupils in the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior management team now collects a wide range of information on teaching, the curriculum and pupils' progress. The use of this information to drive improvement is developing although occasionally is not rigorous enough. For example, the lack of challenge for the more able, observed by managers in a few lessons, has not been fully resolved and the needs of these pupils are not yet fully met. However, equality of opportunity is good, particularly for the pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the full integration of pupils with a range of difficulties is a real strength in the school. With more focus on the needs of the more able, the gap in the attainment of different groups is narrowing.

Governors play a suitable role in leading the school. They have been instrumental in the development of the Children's Centre, which has successfully secured the future intake for the school. They are aware of the school's many strengths but have not been sufficiently challenging in the past to ensure the issues raised in the previous inspection have been fully resolved.

The school involves parents in supporting their children's learning in many effective ways. Communications are good. Staff and the headteacher are available every morning as children arrive and parents welcome the opportunity to converse and raise any concerns. Links with other partners are effective as seen very clearly in the partnership with the Children's Centre. Other links especially with health providers enables the school to provide well for pupils' welfare. The school makes every effort to ensure

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pupils' safety. Staff are checked for suitability to work with children, child protection arrangements are in place, and all systems are effective.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. A wide range of activities link the school to the local community and includes visits to teach pupils about different faiths and traditions. The school is planning to extend its links to the wider local community and globally.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children often start in Reception with skills and understanding that are much lower than what is usually seen for this age, particularly in their communication and social skills. Attainment at the end of Reception last year dipped to well below average and the school recognised that children did not make enough progress. The school has reorganised provision and children are now making satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory. A wide, imaginative and challenging range of experiences carefully matched to the needs of this age range are provided. Outdoors is used very well and further improvements to the area are imminent. Children's welfare is good and based on caring relationships. The manager works closely with parents and the onsite Nursery, and this helps children to settle quickly. The evaluation of the new organisation is in the early stages and its impact on children's learning is not yet clear.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The response to the pre-inspection questionnaire was small and was almost entirely positive about the quality of provision provided by the school. Comments included, 'The school is going from strength to strength with many effective changes' and 'My child has real difficulties and I can come in any time to discuss any problems'. Inspectors agree with these positive comments. There were no significant trends in the very small number of concerns raised in the questionnaires, but inspectors did consider these as part of the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lancaster Ridge 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 28 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 171 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	16	57	12	43	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	39	15	54	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	39	16	57	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	15	54	13	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	54	11	39	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	14	50	14	50	0	0	0	0
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)	13	46	10	36	2	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	43	16	57	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	46	12	43	1	4	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	36	16	57	0	0	1	4
The school is led and managed effectively	15	54	12	43	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	54	12	43	1	4	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.



23 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lancaster Ridge Primary School, Lancaster, LA1 3L

Thank you all so much for the friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit at what was a busy time for the school, with your harvest festival and the visit of the Life Education Bus. This variety of activities is obviously one of the reasons for you all enjoying school. You behave well and care for each other and I agreed with your comments about your school being friendly. It was good to see you all being so energetic at play and keeping fit. I was also pleased to hear that the school teaches you how to keep safe. Lancaster Ridge provides a satisfactory education and is getting better.

To improve your school I have asked your headteacher and governors to:

- help more of you make good progress especially in English and mathematics
- make sure that all of your lessons are exciting and to check that you are always given work with just the right level of challenge and difficulty
- check that you all understand the targets you have been given and that marking tells you how to make your work better
- ensure that children in the Reception class always experience a variety of challenging activities.

I am sure that you will help especially by attending regularly and by making your work as neat as possible. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jennifer Platt

Lead Inspector

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