

Seven Stars Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119285
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339398
Inspection dates	21–22 April 2010
Reporting inspector	Ruth James 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	136
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Stunell
Headteacher	Mrs Lynsey Austen
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Thirteen lessons were observed and seven teachers seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher and other members of school staff, groups of pupils and with governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including policies and minutes of meetings. The responses to 37 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in Key Stage 1, especially in writing
- the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve attendance
- the leadership and management of improvement initiatives and their impact.

Information about the school

Seven Stars Primary School is smaller than average. The large majority of pupils are of White British origin. The proportion of pupils that are eligible for free school meals is very high. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above that found nationally, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs. The school has acquired Investors in People status, Healthy Schools status and the Activemark.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where care, guidance and support are outstanding, enabling pupils to flourish in a happy and well-organised environment. Parents and carers are very positive about the work of the school.

From starting points which are well below those typical of their age when they start in Nursery or Reception, pupils are making good progress as a result of the good teaching they receive. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been below average for a number of years, partly because of a legacy of underachievement. Current assessment data from the school and inspection evidence are indicative of rising standards at all key stages, brought about because of the wide-ranging improvements, especially in the quality of teaching. Much work has been done to improve standards in writing and this is beginning to pay dividends in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but remains an area for improvement. High levels of effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities help this group to make good progress and achieve well.

Excellent leadership by the headteacher has led to a transformation in the culture and ethos in the school in recent years and she is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior staff and coordinators. The ethos of the school is open and welcoming which creates a safe and happy environment for learning. Staff know pupils and their families very well and any pupils in need of additional support are identified early. Very effective help is given to address pupils' particular needs, often through contact with a range of other professionals or by skilled teachers and support staff. There are good links with local secondary schools, which help the transition for older pupils.

Behaviour observed by inspectors around the school and in lessons is good for the vast majority of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2. Pupils are polite and friendly and treat others with respect. However, in Key Stage 1 the challenging behaviour of a few pupils makes it difficult at times for them to take full advantage of all the learning opportunities. Staff use sensible strategies to deal with this misbehaviour and to ensure that it does not impact adversely on others. The vigorous efforts of the school to encourage regular attendance are working and attendance is now broadly average. Nevertheless, there is more work to do to increase the proportion of pupils with highest level of attendance.

Teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic, reflective practitioners and have good relationships with pupils. Lessons provide a variety of interesting learning experiences. A rigorous assessment system and formal progress reviews help to ensure that teachers make effective use of assessment information in planning, but there are instances of whole-class teaching which do not always meet the needs of pupils of different ages and

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abilities. The curriculum has been developed to provide more hands-on experiences for pupils to help put learning into context and to promote links between different subjects. Extra-curricular opportunities are a strength and there is enthusiastic participation in options including a range of sports.

The school's self-evaluation clearly identifies strengths and areas for development and very effective systems are in place to continue the drive for improvement. The school's development plan includes clear actions to address the key priorities. Consequently, there is good capacity to improve further. Governors display a range of valuable skills and provide good levels of challenge and support. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills and improve their spelling
 - ensuring that in all lessons teachers plan work at the appropriate level of difficulty and challenge for pupils of different ages and abilities
 - developing additional, individual and specific strategies for behaviour management for the few pupils in Key Stage 1 who present challenging behaviour.
- Improve the proportion of pupils with higher levels of attendance by:
 - refining and developing existing strategies
 - working closely with relevant agencies and pupils and their parents and carers.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and achieve well. They display positive attitudes to learning and respond enthusiastically in class because of the good teaching they receive. They are very keen to answer questions and cooperate well in group activities, striving to do their best.

In the past standards have been below average, but the school's assessment data and lesson observations show that standards for current pupils are rising. Progress measures, the school's assessment data and observations of lessons, together with scrutiny of work, all show that pupils are making good progress from well below average starting points. Boys reached higher standards than girls in 2009, although progress measures show that both groups made good progress. Standards in writing, although improving well, remain a priority for the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress because of support that is carefully tailored to their needs and because their progress is monitored assiduously by the adults. Any pupils who fall behind benefit from early, effective interventions to help them catch up. The vast majority of pupils behave well, both in lessons and around school. Pupils are

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friendly and helpful, treating adults and other pupils courteously and with respect. However, a tiny minority of pupils in Key Stage 1 present challenging behaviour. The school's clear and sensible strategies for managing behaviour have brought about significant improvement in a relatively short time. Staff recognise that there is more to be done to ensure that these few pupils can participate fully and productively in lessons at all times.

Pupils are rightly proud of their school. Older pupils show good levels of care for the younger ones. They have a well-developed sense of social and moral issues, but their knowledge and understanding of other cultures, although improving, is less strong. Pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about healthy lifestyles, which are encouraged through the varied programme of extra-curricular sports.

Attendance has improved and is now about average as a result of the strenuous efforts of the school and partner agencies. While some individual cases of poor attendance are associated with specific medical and other issues, the proportion of pupils with the highest level of attendance remains too low.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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?

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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Teaching is good overall, promoting good learning and progress. The majority of lessons observed were good, with instances of outstanding and satisfactory teaching also seen. Teachers are enthusiastic practitioners and have very good relationships with pupils. Explanations are very clear and lessons include a range of learning activities which engage interest and motivate pupils, as well as enabling them to learn new information and practise skills. Effective use is made of question and answer sessions, talk partners and role play. Interactive whiteboards are also used well in some lessons. Weaker features of a few of the lessons observed included overlong teacher-led introductory sessions which did not always meet the needs of pupils of different abilities and ages. The rigorous assessment system involves effective analysis of the progress made by pupils. This information is used well in future planning. Pupils know their targets and marking often effectively pinpoints aspects of work that can be improved.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and provides well-organised and imaginative learning experiences for pupils which facilitate their enjoyment and engagement. The curriculum is reviewed and monitored to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of pupils. Good use is made of feedback from pupils. This has confirmed, for example, that pupils' enjoyment of science is improving as a result of an increased focus on investigative work. The focus on personal, health and social education promotes pupils' personal development and well-being effectively, which is reflected particularly in positive relationships and attitudes to learning. Cross-curricular provision has been well developed and this is clearly evidenced in teachers' planning. Pupils are able to make numeracy and literacy links with other subjects. More work is planned to develop information and communication technology (ICT) provision further and make best use of the spacious well-equipped ICT suite. Extra-curricular opportunities are plentiful and have good take-up, especially cooking, gardening and sports.

Inclusion is a real strength of the school. Very well-targeted support for all pupils has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities available and the school can point to striking examples where pupils have been well supported, enabling them to engage in school life and learning. Multi-agency work with individual families is very effective. The school's nurturing ethos is highly supportive but with high expectations. The work of the school with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their success is indicative of the fact that this is embedded at all levels. Strategies for behaviour management have been used well and the benefits are visible, especially in Key Stage 2, where no instances of inappropriate behaviour were seen in lessons. There are many examples of the school working to encourage regular attendance both with pupils and their families and carers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

The very strong and highly effective leadership of the headteacher has played a key role in moving the school forward. She has successfully changed the culture, inspiring staff, raising aspirations and encouraging pupils to achieve their best. There has been a strong drive for improvement, staffing issues have been resolved and there is now a strong sense of common purpose and very good teamwork among all staff. Initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and assessment, attendance and behaviour have all had an impact. Equal opportunities are promoted well. Individualised support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is a particular strength. There is good awareness of issues around the attainment and progress of different groups, with different teachers leading projects such as improving boys' writing and raising girls' achievement in mathematics. These initiatives are showing benefits.

There is good involvement of senior staff and coordinators in monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. Safeguarding arrangements are secure and meet requirements. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that there is a safe environment for pupils. The school promotes community cohesion well, especially in terms of the school and immediate local community. Links with a school with a multicultural intake are being developed and themed curricular weeks, such as world week, are used to improve knowledge of other cultures and religions.

Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school and are highly committed to ensuring that the school continues to improve.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
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	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter Nursery with skills at levels well below those typical for children of their age and by the time they join Key Stage 1 they have reached average to below average levels of attainment. Specific focus is given to developing communication, personal and social skills and, as a result, children's language development and social skills are much improved by the time they enter Year 1. Children have very good relationships with adults and play well individually and together. They are motivated and enthusiastic to join in activities.

Adults demonstrate a good knowledge of how children learn and develop as well as their welfare requirements. They have created a warm and welcoming environment with opportunities for children to make good progress in all six areas of development. Activities are well planned and based on thorough and accurate observations. All children are suitably challenged. Regular assessment and half-termly progress reviews lead to clear individual targets being set and staff are able to demonstrate how they have raised children's achievement. Very effective relationships are developing with parents and carers. Leadership is very strong and all staff work well as a team. There are effective systems for monitoring and review with appropriate plans for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation.

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

Parents and carers are very positive about the school. One example of a positive comment about the support provided by the school came from the parent of a child who had moved from another area: 'She has settled in brilliantly due to all the support from her fantastic teachers and the staff. They have gone out of their way to ensure she settled in well and she has come on brilliantly.' Another wrote, 'Since being at Seven Stars his progress has been exceptional, the head and teaching staff are brilliant.'

A small minority of parents and carers had concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the school systems for behaviour management generally work well and pupils perceive them to be fair and effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Seven Stars 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 154 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	68	11	30	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	65	13	35	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	51	17	46	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	43	20	54	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	46	18	49	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	51	17	46	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	17	46	19	51	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)	12	32	20	54	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	51	15	41	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	38	18	49	4	11	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	13	35	21	57	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	17	46	18	49	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	49	15	41	2	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Seven Stars Primary School, Leyland, PR25 1TD

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed coming into your lessons and talking to you. We found that yours is a good school which gives you excellent care and support. Your parents and carers are rightly very happy with the education the school provides.

In the past standards have been below average. However, you are now doing better because of the good teaching you receive which enables you to make good progress. In lessons teachers organise enjoyable learning opportunities and teaching assistants provide good support, especially for those of you with particular difficulties. We have asked teachers to make sure in lessons that the work is always just the right level of difficulty for every one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. Teachers are working hard to improve the quality of your writing and we want them to make sure you have plenty of opportunities to practise writing and improve your spelling.

The school provides a wide range of interesting activities for you including trips and visits, and plenty of extra-curricular sports which help you to lead healthy lifestyles. You work well in your lessons, enjoy your learning and cooperate well with each other. You told us that you feel safe and that adults will always listen if you have a concern.

The Nursery and Reception classes provide a good start to school life. Almost all of you behave well in lessons and around school and you show respect for adults and each other. We found that you are polite and friendly. A few younger pupils find it difficult to behave appropriately in lessons and we have asked the headteacher and staff to look for more ways to help these children.

Attendance has improved but we have asked the school to try and make it even better. You can help by making sure you come to school every day and continuing to work hard so that you learn as much as possible.

We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Ruth James

Her Majesty's Inspector

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