



Abram Bryn Gates Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106414
LEA Wigan
Inspection number 277553
Inspection dates 16 January 2006 to 17 January 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Colin Smith CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Lily Lane
School category	Community		Bamfurlong
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wigan, Lancashire WN2 5JT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 866392
Number on roll	178	Fax number	01942 863251
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr J Clegg
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr S Sheekey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Abram Bryn Gates is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is higher than the national average, reflecting the extent of social disadvantage in the area. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average. The majority of children are from a white British background. On the whole, children enter school with attainment that is below that expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education and satisfactory value for money. The very low test results in 2004 convinced the staff that something was wrong and a full review took place. Effective improvement strategies were introduced and underachievement was stemmed. Standards began to rise and improved considerably in 2005. As a result, children's achievement is now satisfactory overall. Inspection evidence confirms that progress in Years 1 to 6 is now satisfactory.

Children in the Reception class make a good start in response to good teaching. Standards are average in all subjects by the end of Year 2. However, standards are still below the levels expected in Year 6 overall, largely because children had been underachieving lower down the school. School data shows that standards are rising through the school. Although children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, the achievement of the more able children is still not consistent in all lessons. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, but some teachers are more successful than others in catering for children's different learning needs.

With support from the local authority, leadership and management have become much more effective in raising standards. The systems introduced to check the work of the school have revealed a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses. Strong action has been taken to ensure sustained improvement. Consequently, the school has correctly judged the children's personal development and the level of care provided to be good. Good links with external agencies enhance these areas. The school has identified accurately teaching and leadership to be satisfactory. The school's effectiveness undoubtedly declined following the previous inspection but the determined action taken to change the course of events indicates a good capacity for self-improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase achievement of the more able children.
- Improve teaching and learning further by ensuring that children's different learning needs are fully taken into account and planned for in all lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The drive to raise standards has improved children's achievement, which is now satisfactory overall. Reception children make a good start and most achieve the learning goals expected. Children make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and reach the standards expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics.

Very low standards by the end of Year 6 became a concern in 2004. Many junior age children were underachieving. This is why the school judged standards of achievement to be inadequate. Rigorous procedures were introduced to track children's progress and set very challenging targets. As a result, the rate of progress doubled. Nevertheless,

the standards achieved in 2005 were still significantly lower than average overall because of earlier underachievement. Although standards were average in mathematics and science, below average standards in English reflected weaknesses in writing. The introduction of a writing improvement project is yielding very promising results. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now at the levels expected.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, as do vulnerable children and those at an early stage of learning English. However, some of the able children are still not fulfilling their potential. Children's reading and numeracy skills are sufficient to ensure that they are not impeded in learning other subjects and their writing skills are noticeably improving.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Children's enjoyment of school is reflected in their very good attendance. They say that 'teachers make their learning fun' and this is why they develop good attitudes to learning. Children behave well and relationships between staff and children are very good.

Children take their responsibilities very seriously. For example, at lunchtime, older children act as play leaders in helping and supporting younger children. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Lively assemblies, discussion sessions and school council meetings encourage them to consider their own feelings and those of others. Such activities lead them to develop respect for others, including people in the community and those from other cultures.

The careful development of children's personal qualities and skills prepare them well for the future and help to secure their economic well-being. Children in Years 1, 2 and 5 have gained a Construction Skills Gold Award, demonstrating their thinking and planning skills and understanding of teamwork. The recently formed school council is already effective in enabling children to contribute to decision making in ways such as working with the Forestry Commission to improve the local environment.

Through personal, health and physical education, children acquire a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and what it means to stay safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Senior staff have worked hard to improve teaching by checking lessons and providing additional training. The previous unsatisfactory teaching has been eliminated. The improvement in the teaching of writing is evident in children's search for interesting vocabulary. For example, a Year 2 child wrote, 'he was hiding with shadows'. Good features common to all lessons

include the management of children, the pace of the lesson, clear learning objectives and teachers' probing questioning. These factors ensure that children work purposefully and try to improve. Children identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well, often by well trained classroom assistants.

The assessment of children's learning is satisfactory and improving. Teachers in reception, Year 3 and Year 6 use the information well in matching tasks to children's different learning needs. This is explicit in lesson plans and ensures that all children learn successfully. This practice is not yet consistent in all classes. When the same task is given to all children, irrespective of their different needs, the learning of the more able is not extended sufficiently and children at the lower end of the learning scale make mistakes. The lack of an agreed policy for planning lessons is impeding improvements in this area.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provided is satisfactory with good features. Good provision is made for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the needs of the gifted and talented children are not fully met in all lessons. This is why the curriculum is not as good as the school believes.

The curriculum has strengths. It meets all requirements and is particularly well enriched through a very good range of educational visits and out of school activities. These experiences stimulate enjoyment in learning and nurture children's talents and interests effectively.

Sensitive adjustments have been made in response to perceived curriculum weaknesses. The writing project has had a dramatic impact on children's confidence and skills in writing. A rejuvenated approach to teaching science through investigations is proving highly effective, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

The school is successful in promoting children's personal, health and citizenship education. In particular, healthy lifestyles and personal safety are woven meaningfully into the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of care, support and guidance provided has a marked impact on children's personal development and well-being. Robust procedures for child protection and assessing any risks ensure that children are safeguarded. Children are well prepared for starting school and make a smooth transfer into the secondary school.

The school has made a determined effort to involve children in their own learning. Children's progress is accurately assessed each term and targets are set to help them to know what they need to do to improve. Children's clear understanding of the process is reflected in statements such as, 'I should be a Level 4 but my punctuation let me

down'. Their work is marked conscientiously, although pointers for improvement are sometimes omitted.

The school is very responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable children. Staff frequently meet with members of external agencies to plan the support required and review progress. These meetings are usually conducted in the children's own homes, providing an invaluable link with parents.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's caring, supportive and inclusive disposition has a marked impact on children's good personal development and well-being. The recently appointed deputy headteacher is already very influential in raising standards.

Good systems have been implemented to measure how well the school is performing, particularly in tracking children's progress, checking quality of teaching and examining the outcomes in children's written work. Teachers now have the tools to measure how well they are teaching and where to make changes. Most importantly, teachers' personal performance is reviewed in the light of improvements in children's learning. The one flaw in the system is the lack of an agreed method of planning lessons, which can then be checked to ensure that children's different learning needs are identified from the outset, particularly with regard to the more able ones.

The school recognised that it had not built sufficiently on its previous inspection and took forthright action to raise the stakes. Staff, children, parents and governors now share a collective vision for improvement. This is reflected in everything that the school does. The honest admission that the school was underperforming fuelled important changes. These have been recognised by the local authority and the intensive support originally provided is considered no longer necessary. Although the school knows there is more to do, the good capacity for improvement has been demonstrated. Governors provide good support but they recognise that they have more to do in holding the school to account.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for helping us during our recent inspection.

A lot of hard work has been done to help you to achieve as well as you can. The good features of the school are:

- your attitudes, behaviour and good personal development
- the way all of you are looked after and cared for
- the good start you make when you begin school
- the way managers and teachers are trying to improve the school.

There are two areas for improvement. Standards had slipped in the juniors but they are improving again. To ensure that the improvements continue the school must:

- improve the progress of those of you who are able to do more difficult work to help you to reach your full potential
- improve teaching and learning further to ensure that your different learning needs are planned for and catered for in all lessons.