

Pikes Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105161
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	324170
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Liam Trippier HMI

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)	358
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	Mrs R Speak
Headteacher	Mr K Naughton
Date of previous school inspection	30 January 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gibraltar Street Bolton Lancashire BL3 5HU
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than average. It is located near to the centre of Bolton and pupils come from diverse backgrounds, including areas of significant social and economic disadvantage. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Nearly all pupils speak English as an additional language. A lower than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities or have a statement of special educational need. The school has recently been awarded the Eco-School Silver, Healthy Schools, Basic Skills and Active Mark awards. The school has also achieved the Financial Management in Schools standard.

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 with some outstanding features. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is a significant factor in the school's improvement in the last two years. His vision of ensuring every child is guided and supported well is reflected in their outstanding personal development and well-being and in the good progress they make throughout their time in school.

The excellent evaluation of the school's work gives a clear picture of strengths and areas for development. Leaders at all levels are very effective and ensure that standards are continually improving and pupils' achievement is good. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. There is now a stable governing body and pupils' attendance has improved significantly due to the implementation of the school's clear and effective attendance policy.

The vast majority of parents who made their views known to the inspection team indicate that their children are very happy at the school and express high levels of satisfaction. The school enjoys the overwhelming support of parents.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Most lessons are conducted at a brisk pace and there are many opportunities for pupils to be active and talk about their learning. Teachers choose resources that help to maintain good levels of engagement in most lessons. Teachers plan for the wide range of abilities in their classes and pupils enjoy the activities, but some are capable of higher levels and are not always challenged enough.

Standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have been broadly average for several years. This represents good progress given pupils' significantly lower than average starting points. The school recognises there is more to be done to raise standards further, for example, for more able pupils in both key stages who are possibly capable of higher levels. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those identified as underachieving receive effective additional support and also make good progress.

The good curriculum is effective, broad and balanced with an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills. This provides effectively for their differing needs and interests through good quality enrichment activities such as 'Wow days' and themed weeks.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils have a clear understanding of how to live healthily and act safely. Pupils' attendance is now satisfactory after years of low attendance rates. Staff demonstrate a very high level of care for pupils and safeguarding requirements are met fully.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. Many are also at the very early stages of learning English. They make good progress and achieve well in the Nursery and by the time they leave the Reception classes because teaching is good. Good induction arrangements ensure that children settle quickly into school routines and there is a strong focus on developing independence in children's learning.

They are well cared for in a rich, vibrant learning environment. They behave well and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. There is a well-structured approach to developing children's use of language in practical activities and especially in the varied opportunities for play. Planning

is good and children enjoy what is on offer as well targeted provision caters effectively for their widely differing needs. Effective assessment systems inform planning for future learning well. The Nursery has a well-developed outdoor area to which the children have continuous access. Thorough and careful planning ensures that the best use is made of the Reception class outdoor area. However, this space is not as good in quality as that of the Nursery.

Staff meet with parents informally to discuss children's progress, but some parents said they would like more opportunities to discuss their child's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage with a regular key worker. The school has correctly identified this as an area for development. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and the coordinator has a clear view about the strengths and weaknesses of the department.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the outside learning environment for the Reception class so that all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can easily and continually access high quality outdoor activities.
- Ensure that pupils who are capable of reaching higher levels are given work which is better suited to their needs so that they can meet more challenging targets throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age. Good teaching ensures pupils make good progress and the school has introduced a range of successful measures to ensure learners reach standards in line with national averages by the time they leave Year 6. There are no significant differences between the performance of different groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who also make good progress. The school's rigorous and systematic monitoring of pupils' performance enables early and precise interventions to occur where underachievement is identified. This ensures that pupils receive the high quality help they need to improve.

Inspection evidence from school assessment records, pupils' workbooks and from lesson observations confirms that progress in English, mathematics and science is good overall for the majority of pupils. However, not enough pupils attain the higher levels of which some are capable. The school sets targets each year and pupils meet these, however these do not always provide sufficient challenge for higher ability pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. They show great respect for themselves and for others, and are polite, welcoming, friendly and courteous. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school, as a result of the consistently applied behaviour management system. The benefits of adopting healthy lifestyles are well promoted and pupils understand the impact different food has on the body. Pupils report that they feel safe in school and are clear that bullying is unacceptable. The peer mediators understand their role clearly and can explain how they listen to both sides and help pupils negotiate a solution to a problem.

Pupils enthusiastically raise money for local, national and international charities. Their visit to meet with the local environmental health officers helped them to understand the importance of recycling to improve the local area and helped to heighten awareness of environmental issues

and sustainability. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education through their acquisition of good basic skills. They are well aware of the importance of a good education and one pupil suggested, 'If you're good at planning stories it will help you to become a writer or if you're good at PE you could become an athlete.'

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils are enthusiastic, have positive attitudes to learning and work hard. Relationships between teachers and pupils are positive. The attractive and stimulating learning environments in all classes help to support pupils' learning through useful displays which provide guidance and information. Interactive whiteboards are used to good effect and this helps to engage and motivate most pupils. The use of talking partners is a strong feature in most lessons and helps pupils to become actively involved in their own learning. Pupils are encouraged to give full spoken answers to questions and are allowed thinking time to formulate and extend their ideas. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan lessons carefully to meet the needs of most learners. In the best lessons, pupils formulate their own 'steps to success' which gives them a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Putting learning into a 'real life' context also helps to deepen pupils' understanding; for example, in a lesson on kilograms pupils had to find the weight of real food rather than complete worksheets. However, in a minority of lessons some pupils are passive learners and are not as fully engaged in tasks as they should be, particularly higher attaining pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum and other activities is good. The school rightly places a strong emphasis on good development of pupils' speaking and listening skills so they can access all activities provided. Pupils' enthusiasm is generated well through a range of interesting activities. Educational visits and visitors to the school broaden pupils' horizons and enhance the curriculum to develop pupils' interests. This is seen in the topic weeks and the 'Wow' days that are held. Recently a science week challenged pupils and resulted in many interesting experiments being undertaken, which pupils thoroughly enjoyed. There are effective arrangements in place to meet the needs of pupils who experience difficulties with literacy and numeracy, such as early morning classes and well resourced letter sounds programmes. The programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes well to pupils' personal development. This promotes good levels of understanding of different issues to prepare pupils well for their future education and life as citizens. Recent initiatives to encourage pupils to link their knowledge of different subjects together develops their basic skills well. The school is rightly developing the curriculum to fully meet the needs, interests and aspirations of all pupils through a themed approach to further enhance the development of their basic skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pastoral care is outstanding, particularly for vulnerable pupils and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school provides a wide range of effective intervention strategies including 'The Sunflower Group' and 'Life

Skills' which contribute to increased levels of self-esteem for particular pupils. Teaching assistants provide excellent support, both within the class and outside, for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The 'Feelings Boards' in all classrooms are appreciated and used by all pupils, as one reflected, 'It helps you to express your feelings and if you're upset or angry people will help you.' Individual education plans are detailed and regularly reviewed with parents and pupils to ensure that pupils' needs are met and good progress is made. There are good links with external agencies, such as speech and language therapy, to support pupils' needs. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements. Health and safety procedures are detailed and risk assessments are fully in place. Most pupils know their targets in literacy and numeracy. There is evidence of the development of peer assessment and self assessment in some classes. However, although there are some good examples of marking which helps to identify the next steps in learning, the new marking policy is not yet consistently applied throughout the school. Senior leaders are aware of this and are taking effective steps to ensure that pupils will receive a consistent quality of marking throughout the school so they all know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher provides highly effective leadership for the school, articulating a clear vision which is rigorously focused on continuous improvement in teaching and learning. The senior leadership team have established high expectations and a secure focus on raising standards as the core of the school's work. They work very effectively with subject coordinators and together they demonstrate a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

The headteacher has the trust and confidence of the school and local community. Relationships with local groups such as the Arabic School and Pikes Lane Community Club are strong. They use the school facilities to host activities and many pupils from the school attend these groups out of school hours. The school's overall contribution to community cohesion is good as useful links have been made successfully with different communities in Britain, but international links are not yet developed in full. The school maintains positive relationships with families and a relatively new parent/teacher association has raised funds to buy equipment for the school. An increasing number of parents volunteer to support pupils in school and the positive impact of this partnership can be seen in the improved progress in reading by a particular group of pupils. Good investment in training has contributed to improvements in teaching, learning and the quality of the curriculum. The learning environment is continually improving and is of a high standard.

Governors support and challenge the school well. They have good knowledge of the school's performance and a clear view of its strengths and where improvement is required. The school has excellent capacity to improve further as demonstrated by the recent improvements to teaching and learning, the excellent leadership of the headteacher and effective and clear systems to evaluate and develop the school. The school provides good value for money.

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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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
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 Pikes Lane Primary School, Bolton, BL3 5HU

Thank you for making the other inspectors and myself so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We very much appreciated your support and help. The report is now complete and I would like to tell you what it contains.

Here are some of the good things we found out.

- Pikes Lane is a good school.
- You are taught well and the school has introduced an interesting range of topics for you to study.
- The headteacher and the senior staff run the school well.
- You are well cared for by the staff.
- Your behaviour and manners are excellent.
- You work hard and make good progress.
- You feel safe and happy in school.

I have asked your headteacher to improve the outside learning area for the children in the Reception classes and to make sure that the pupils capable of higher levels in their work reach them.

You have all done very well and I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and attending school regularly.