



Sharples Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105162
LEA Bolton
Inspection number 277307
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Anthony Painter CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ashworth Lane
School category	Community		Bolton
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire BL1 8RX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 333077
Number on roll	231	Fax number	01204 333078
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Shirley Buckley
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Ms Aleksandra Hartshorne

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized school includes provision for up to 16 children with visual impairments who travel from a wide area. Most other children come from the residential area around the school with a number of indicators of disadvantage such as above average levels of children receiving free school meals. Greater than typical numbers of children come from minority ethnic groups and are learning English as an additional language. In recent years there have been above average numbers of children leaving and joining the school. Attainment on entry to the school is below average, with many children having only limited English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that it is a good school and judge that it gives good value for money. The headteacher has effectively led significant improvements in the last two years since her appointment, when standards were too low. Good monitoring and evaluation to establish challenging targets for pupils has helped improve and ensure good teaching and learning. All children achieve well from below average attainment on entry and standards are rising through the school and over time. Although overall standards by the start of Year 1 remain below average, good Foundation Stage provision helps many to reach the expected levels, particularly in number and personal development. Good achievement in Years 1 to 6 brings children to overall average standards. Children with special educational needs, including those with visual impairment, are identified and supported well to make good progress.

The adults in school ensure that all the children are well cared for and benefit from the full range of opportunities available. A very positive atmosphere underlies lessons and a wide range of activities, including many successful visits and visitors, help children to learn well. Relationships at all levels are very good and underpin children's good personal development.

A strong team approach is developing that ensures that the school can continue to make good progress. However, despite the successes, many systems are still relatively new and the school recognises the need to consolidate its approaches to ensure even better achievement for all children. In particular, teachers need to look at the finer detail of development planning to identify exactly how changes can improve standards.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consolidate the improvements made in recent years and ensure that the identification and planning of developments focuses sufficiently on the fine detail of what is needed to improve provision and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's standards when joining the school are below average, with a substantial proportion having only limited English. Despite this, all achieve well through the school and reach average standards by the end of Year 6. Results of tests in Year 2 have shown substantial improvements in recent years, although weaker results in 2003 reflected the abilities of the children involved.

The school responded well to weak 2003 Year 6 test results with a number of measures to improve teaching and learning. Better assessment systems, for example, have helped teachers to set challenging targets to ensure the progress of individual children. Their success was clear in the significantly better 2004 results and this trend of improvement has been maintained in the 2005 results. Although no national comparisons are yet available, the school's records show that children have made better than expected

progress from their standards in Year 2. In particular, a large number of children achieved the higher Level 5 in science.

There are no significant differences in the achievement of children with different backgrounds and abilities. Children with English as an additional language quickly gain confidence and progress well with the other children. Those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are accurately identified and good support is given. Children who have visual impairments benefit from substantial specialist support that allows them to play a full part in lessons and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that provision is good. By Year 6, children are keen to learn, attentive to their teachers and proud of their school. They keep themselves safe, behave sensibly and are polite. Bullying and racism are very rare and children say that any incidents are dealt with quickly. Current school developments are focusing on improving playground facilities and systems of playground friends.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Year 6 children, for example, confidently expressed their feelings during a well-led assembly about moving house. Children learn about democracy and working in teams through the effective school council and are very pleased that their voice is heard. They know that rules are necessary and understand them because they are discussed openly. Children know and like the discipline systems and try very hard to gain rewards. Through extensive work for local and national charities, children recognise that they are better off than many in the world. They are developing awareness that everyone is equal regardless of their background.

Children enjoy coming to school, which is reflected in the above average attendance figures. Procedures for monitoring and encouraging attendance are effective and children try hard to achieve reward certificates. They respond positively to responsibilities and understand their roles, for instance, a prefect said, 'We are here to help'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good, reflecting the school's own evaluation, and enables all children to learn well. Well-organised classrooms have clearly established routines and teachers' careful explanations and instructions allow learning to proceed with good pace. Effective discipline and reward systems successfully encourage children to behave well and contribute to good learning. Teachers' very good relationships with children ensure that children of all backgrounds or abilities have confidence to 'have a go'.

New developments to improve teaching are introduced thoughtfully and purposefully. For example, attention to improving children's writing is having a positive impact on standards and progress. Good systems enable teachers to identify and support children with special educational needs. Effective teaching assistants make a positive contribution by supporting individuals and groups and ensuring their progress.

Teachers use the school's regular and extensive assessment and targeting systems to ensure that most tasks are well matched to children's needs. Frequent reviews of targets help teachers to maintain the levels of challenge. As a result, children are keen to work and their lessons often stretch their learning well. Through discussing these targets, children increasingly understand what they need to do next and how they are improving. However, teachers recognise they can make even more use of assessment information when planning work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that curricular provision is good. The curriculum fully meets the needs and interests of learners and statutory requirements are met. There is an effective emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers are beginning to establish clearer links between subjects to interest children further and help them to learn. However, this work is still in its infancy and remains a priority for the school. Good provision for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, including those from the visually impaired unit, allows these children to be fully included in what is taught.

Children's learning is enriched by events like a 'World War II' week and a poetry week. Visits, including a residential trip, are well planned to promote academic learning as well as to develop personal skills like teamwork and self-esteem. Good attention is paid to health and safety matters. The good range of clubs spans interests from sports to drama and are very well attended by children in Years 1 to 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

'I like this school because teachers really care about you', said one child, and parents fully agree that this is a very safe and caring school. All staff know and follow high quality child protection procedures. Rigorous risk assessments, a particularly high priority during the recent building work, ensure that children are safe. Effective links with the local secondary school help enrich the curriculum and give children confidence.

The school's good programme for health education enables children to know how to stay fit. They are also taught simple methods of remaining safe and why substances such as tobacco and alcohol are dangerous. The school closely monitors children's academic and social progress and passes on this information to parents well. However, teachers could use assessment information more when planning some work for children.

There are high quality procedures for the early identification of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Parents of these children are fully involved in their child's programme and outside agencies are used well to support the school's work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

In recent years, good leadership and management, reflecting the school's own evaluation, have led to significant improvements in standards and achievement for all children. A clear and effective framework for further development has been established and the school has good capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher has established an effective responsibility structure that promotes good teamwork and a very positive atmosphere. Governors are increasingly involved in evaluating and challenging the school, for example, through links with individual classes. There are good opportunities for parents and children to contribute their own ideas for consideration.

A substantial timetable and programme of monitoring and review has been established. The headteacher's observations are accurate and perceptive, giving a comprehensive view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring of teaching and pupils' records contributes well to performance management and school development. A good range of data on children's standards and progress is aiding target setting and helping to improve teaching. Subject coordinators have a good understanding of their roles and use the knowledge gained from monitoring planning, teaching and children's work to identify ways for the school to improve. Lessons learned from monitoring are included in the school's planning and have successfully helped to improve provision. Identified developments are well matched to the needs of the school and are linked to training and the purchase of resource needs but are sometimes too broad. Planning does not always focus enough on the finer detail of what now needs to be done to ensure continued improvements.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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 very much for being so welcoming to us when we recently visited your school. We were very impressed with your good behaviour and the way you were all so polite and friendly.

We were also pleased with the ways your teachers and other staff have worked together so successfully to improve the school in recent years. Good teaching and lots of different interesting things to do are helping you all to do well. We agreed with you when you told us that you felt safe and that the school was fair. We liked the way you all worked and played together well.

We have asked the adults working in school to make sure they keep improving the school. In particular, we would like them to look carefully at exactly what they need to do to make sure you can keep learning well. We are sure that they will make a good job of it.

We very much enjoyed talking with you and your teachers as well as watching you enjoy learning in lessons and clubs. We wish you and the school the very best for the future.