



Boundary Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133291
LEA Blackpool
Inspection number 282986
Inspection dates 2 November 2005 to 3 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Jane Jones

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dinmore Avenue
School category	Community		Blackpool
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Lancashire, FY3 7RW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01253 478250
Number on roll	329	Fax number	01253 478250
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Collins JP
Date of previous inspection	1 October 2002	Headteacher	Mr D Harrison

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 2 November 2005 - 3 November 2005	Inspection number 282986
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Boundary Primary School is situated in Grange Park in Blackpool. The school is larger than average: it has 293 pupils aged 4 to 11 and a further 36 pupils attend the Nursery part time. Most pupils live in an area that experiences very significant social and economic disadvantage. Some 56% are eligible for free school meals which is four times the national average, but is lower than it used to be. The pupils enter the Nursery with very low standards in all areas of learning. About one third of the pupils have learning difficulties, which is twice the average. More pupils than usual join the school at times other than into the Nursery or Reception classes. Almost all the pupils are white British.

The school has seen lots of change over the last four years. It was formed in 2001 following the amalgamation of an infants and a junior school. In October 2002, it was inspected and was found to require special measures because it did not provide an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. Since then, it has been monitored on a regular basis by HMI. In September 2003, the school moved into a new purpose-built building, sited at the hub of the community along with a Sure Start centre, a city learning centre, and a health centre. The current headteacher took up post in September 2004, and most of the teachers have joined the school within the last two years. Two special education resource facilities opened during the last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It provides a satisfactory education for its pupils and several features are good. This judgement matches the school's view.

Pupils now achieve satisfactorily. The Nursery gives them an excellent start, and they make steady progress in the rest of the school. The most recent results of national tests in Year 6 showed good improvement in mathematics and science. Writing is weak, but the school has started to tackle this problem. Most pupils want to do well: they make reasonable progress in lessons. Teaching is satisfactory. The best is enthusiastic and focuses effectively on what pupils will learn. The use of assessment in teachers' day-to-day work is underdeveloped. The curriculum is satisfactory overall.

The school works hard to promote the pupils' personal development. Each child is well cared for and supported. Parents are increasingly involved in their children's learning and are strongly supportive of the school. The vast majority of pupils behave well: occasional outbursts are usually short-lived because staff manage them effectively. Pupils are proud of their school. The school council represents pupils' views very effectively. Attendance has improved significantly, but remains below average.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding: he has been instrumental in securing the school's rapid improvement over the last four terms, winning the support of all in the school's community. Leadership and management by other staff are satisfactory overall. Governance is good, as is the capacity to improve. There are appropriate systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work, but some are in the early stages. The school provides satisfactory value for money. It benefits from good support from the Children's Services Authority (CSA).

What the school should do to improve further

The school's improvement plan identifies several areas for development. The key priorities are to:

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- continue to improve subject leadership and management in order to raise standards across the school, particularly in English
- enable pupils to become more effective learners
- develop teachers' use of assessment in their day-to-day work
- improve curricular planning to take better account of the wide range of pupils' needs and ensure progression in lessons and over time.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that achievement and standards are satisfactory overall.

The Nursery provides an excellent start to the pupils' education. A few pupils enter the Nursery with skills and confidence typical of their age. They talk with teachers and friends, answer questions in class, and are familiar with books. However, most pupils need much more help, especially with speaking and understanding language, and with personal development. Pupils make good progress from different starting points although, by age 5, many have not achieved what is generally expected in communication and mathematical skills, but most have successfully developed their personal skills.

Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1. By age 7, although test results are low overall, they achieve reasonably well when compared with what they could do when they were 5 years old, and do about as well as other pupils in similar circumstances. In 2005, the pupils' performance improved in mathematics but fell in writing.

The results of national tests in 2005 for pupils aged 11 showed a good improvement in mathematics and science. Preliminary analysis indicates that, for the first time since 2001, the pupils achieved about as well as other pupils in similar circumstances and considering how well they did at age 7. However, standards in English remain too low: there were stronger results in reading but writing was weak. The school has introduced strategies to improve pupils' writing in English and other subjects.

Overall, standards are well below average and few pupils achieve the highest levels at ages 7 and 11. Although pupils now make satisfactory progress, most are not catching up with the majority of pupils of their age. The picture in lessons is similar. Usually, almost all pupils learn something new or practise skills but, in the best lessons, they build confidently from one step to the next, and from lesson to lesson. Pupils who have learning difficulties are generally well supported by teaching assistants and they make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that pupil's personal development is good. The parents are full of praise for the school and the way they and their children are encouraged to be involved and take responsibility. Pupils enjoy school: attendance has improved substantially and is close to the national figure. School council members represent the views of their classmates very effectively and maturely, particularly those elected as officers. Throughout the school, pupils are aware of the need to care for others. They contribute to charities and also readily recall how they watch over younger pupils or those who are upset, and help them to be involved in play or make friends.

Pupils settle quickly into the Nursery and learn to work with each other. Most pupils behave well, are polite and willing to learn. A few pupils find good behaviour difficult and need regular guidance and support from adults, which is readily available in school. Pupils feel safe, value their friends and know what to do if they have a concern. They know how to deal with the rare instances of bullying. They have confidence that adults will listen and help them. Older pupils know what they need to do to have a healthy lifestyle. Their understanding of personal relationships develops well, helped considerably by the good relationships they have with staff. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils recognise right from wrong, confidently take on new experiences in sport, art and leadership, and are delighted when they contribute to decision-making.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory: this agrees with the school's evaluation. In most lessons, teaching was at least satisfactory; it was good in two fifths. However, pupils are not always able to make the most of good teaching. Sometimes, pupils' weak skills in speaking or writing slow their progress. Younger pupils tend to lose concentration when they work independently.

An excellent start is made in the Nursery where the needs of individual children are quickly identified and exciting activities ensure that they have fun while learning at a brisk pace. Most children continue to learn well through the Reception Year, but some opportunities to streamline planning from one class into the next are missed.

The staff know the pupils well: relationships are good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour effectively, praising those who behave well and calmly reminding others what is expected. Occasional outbursts of a minority are handled skilfully. Teachers plan interesting activities, including opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and discuss their ideas. Most teachers share lesson objectives with pupils and some review them later in checking on progress. Teachers have become better at asking questions to test out pupils' thinking. In the best lessons, teachers are clear about what pupils already know as well as what and how they need to learn. They choose activities that successfully challenge the more able, support those who find learning difficult, and overcome gaps in previous learning. Other lessons tend to focus on what the teacher will do rather than what pupils will learn as a result. Recent promising work on a revised format for lesson planning crucially places the emphasis on learning.

Assessment has improved but remains an area for development, as rightly identified by the school. Pupils have targets in English and mathematics, but teachers' marking does not always refer to them or give pupils enough help about how to do better. Assessment information is not used consistently in planning. Many bright and interesting displays support pupils' learning and celebrate good work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, but it needs refining since it does not yet fully meet the needs of all pupils. The Nursery pupils enjoy various activities that broaden their experiences and improve their skills. In Reception, planning does not always take full account of individual needs.

The curriculum gives appropriate emphasis to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Recently, teachers have started planning ways in which pupils can develop their literacy skills in other subjects. Pupils who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties are generally well supported by additional adults, although planning is not consistently effective in making sure they build on their learning systematically. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is developing steadily, but only occasionally through specific tasks in lessons. Curriculum organisation does not always provide continuity for pupils who have artistic and creative talents.

Enrichment opportunities are becoming a strong feature of the school's work. Initiatives, which include individual mathematics programmes, opportunities for collaborative working, and community projects, all enhance the pupils' experiences and learning. A group of Year 6 pupils spoke enthusiastically about an enterprise day that required teamwork and business skills, culminating in an award for the most enterprising team. One pupil summed it up by saying, 'We really had to work hard as a team and put our thinking caps on to make sure we made a profit!'

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes good care of its pupils. Arrangements for ensuring their safety are effective, including well-understood procedures for child protection. Relationships between pupils and staff are exceptionally helpful in giving pupils the confidence to contribute ideas and share uncertainties. However, giving guidance for all pupils on how to improve their work is not as well established. Support provided by teaching assistants for pupils who have learning difficulties enhances their progress and boosts their confidence. Pupils new to the school settle quickly. The oldest pupils feel confident that the school will help them to move successfully to their secondary schools.

The pupils have responded well to the wide range of guidance on how to improve their behaviour, and many willingly ask for advice without prompting. Two recently established special classes support small numbers of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. This arrangement has proved successful in improving behaviour but, in the junior class, planning is not well matched to pupils' individual academic needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's assessment that leadership and management are satisfactory with some notable strengths.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership. He is a very strong advocate for the pupils, whose needs he understands well. His determination and commitment to improving the quality of education provided by the school has won him the support and loyalty of pupils, parents, staff and governors. In turn, he values them and the support they give him. Everyone in this school matters. Under his leadership, the foundations of an improved climate for learning have been laid, and there is a strong and shared focus on raising standards.

A key feature of his successful leadership has been the development of a team approach: the school is more united than at any earlier time. This change in outlook is crucial in setting the scene for further development. Staff now engage positively with initiatives for improvement and reflect constructively on feedback they receive on their practice. Importantly, the headteacher has also been prepared to challenge robustly performance that was not good enough.

The quality of leadership and management by other staff varies but is satisfactory overall. Subject leadership is developing well. It is most advanced in English, mathematics, science, and the humanities. These co-ordinators are enthusiastic and show clear understanding of their responsibilities, including monitoring and supporting the work of colleagues. In addition to the usual opportunities for training, teachers have individual professional development plans and are supported by senior staff.

The headteacher's accurate evaluation is underpinned by appropriate systems for monitoring the school's work, although some are in the early stages, coupled with knowledge gleaned from his hands-on approach to its day-to-day work. There are suitable systems for setting targets for pupils and for tracking progress, although there is work to be done to probe the achievement of different groups and to involve subject leaders in analysing and interpreting data.

Governance is good. Governors are kept fully informed by the headteacher for whom they provide committed yet challenging support. Several have regular contact with the school. Established links provide deeper understanding of the school's work and the impact of actions taken. A core group meets regularly to evaluate the school's progress and plan for improvement.

The CSA has provided substantial and well-judged support for the school, drawing on a wide range of its services. Of particular benefit has been the work of the principal adviser and the consultant from the Intensifying Support Programme. Significant financial commitment has been given and is planned to continue, reflecting the challenging circumstances faced by the school and the community it serves. The CSA's interim statement commits positive support for the headteacher and governors in their efforts to bring continued improvement. The headteacher has also received valuable mentor support from a headteacher colleague. Given the school's track record of rapid

improvement demonstrated over the last four terms, and the CSA's commitment to continued support, capacity for further improvement is good.

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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	3	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	4	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	3	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	3	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	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	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	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	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

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14 November 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly to us when we visited your school to inspect how well it is doing. We liked joining in your lessons and talking to you about the things you do in school and what you think about it.

Your school has improved a lot over the last year or two. We found that it doesn't need to be in 'special measures' any more. You are right to be proud of it and the part you have played in helping it to improve.

Here are some of the best things we found.

Your behaviour is almost always good. Some of you receive special help in Phoenix and The Search Engine.

You try hard in lessons to learn new things and practise your skills.

You care about others in school and in the outside world. The pupils on the school council represent you well: they are good at their jobs.

Teachers and other adults take good care of you and help you to become responsible young people. You are sensible about asking for help when you need it. You know about living healthily and how to keep safe.

You have fun at clubs and enjoy visiting other places, sometimes even performing at theatres and in competitions.

You have an excellent headteacher. He, and the other adults, care very much about all of you and want you to do well.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to improve a few things.

Many of you struggle with writing. We want your teachers to help you become even better writers so that you do well in all of your subjects

We want all the teachers, when they mark your work, to tell you how you could improve.

Also, the teachers need to plan activities in lessons to suit your different abilities – not too easy when you are good at a subject, and help with learning when you find a subject difficult.

Yours sincerely

Jane Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools

Annex B