



Dukesgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105920
Local Authority Salford
Inspection number 287366
Inspection dates 8–9 November 2006
Reporting inspector Jim Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Earlesdon Crescent
School category	Community		Little Hulton, Salford
Age range of pupils	3–11		Lancashire M38 9HF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 7992210
Number on roll (school)	188	Fax number	0161 7997585
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Carol Moores
		Headteacher	Mrs S Darley
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Although the school is somewhat smaller than average, there is a class for each year group. Children come mostly from a local housing estate with very high levels of deprivation. Around two thirds of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is very high. Most children are of White British heritage. A few are of Pakistani, African or Middle Eastern backgrounds. There are a small but significant number of Traveller children. Around one in twenty pupils do not have English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is over twice the national average. The school takes in a higher than average proportion of pupils, mostly juniors, at other than the usual time. There are looked-after pupils in most junior classes. For the past two years the school has been part of the Intensive Support Programme, aimed at raising achievement.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. The high quality care and the stimulating learning atmosphere are a tribute to the experienced headteacher and her teams. This means pupils can learn in a calm, supportive and encouraging environment, centred on very positive relationships between adults and pupils. The school's concern for pupils and their families is a key strength: a range of accredited courses provides additional learning opportunities for parents who want to develop their skills in helping their children. Parents are very positive about what the school provides and report that staff are approachable and helpful when difficulties or concerns arise. As a result, the sizeable numbers of pupils who join other than at the beginning of the year settle quickly. A pupil new to the school said this was his best school because 'everyone looks after you'. Pupils are confident and courteous when talking to adults and most behave well. The small minority with behaviour difficulties are supported effectively.

An active junior school council gives pupils a voice on school matters and pupils take seriously the importance of a healthy lifestyle, taking full advantage of healthy snacks and the breakfast club. Pupils say, 'Lunches are tasty and healthy.' They participate in many physical activities in lessons and extra-curricular sport, knowing about the importance of healthy eating and exercise in making them feel fit and happy. This is summed up in the school's environmental work, which earned them the Eco Award at the highest level.

Although pupils achieve satisfactorily they leave school with standards that are significantly below average. Children start the Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are exceptionally low compared with national expectations. They make good progress in developing their capacity to communicate with each other and in learning to live and work together. This is because the curriculum and teaching focus on creating activities that allow children to grow personally and academically in readiness for Key Stage 1. Progress in later years is satisfactory overall and improving in mathematics and science. However, standards in English are exceptionally low across the school. Significant work has yet to be done to increase the rate of pupils' progress in English, especially writing. For example, in Key Stage 2 classes there are not enough planned opportunities to promote independent writing.

A survey undertaken by the school shows that pupils' attitudes to mathematics and science are significantly more positive than towards English, especially writing. The school has taken important steps to provide more support for pupils' in English and particularly to improve early reading and writing, but these changes are not yet showing through in their progress or in standards. Learning is enhanced by many opportunities to take part in educational visits, musical performances, residential trips and experiences brought to school by outside agencies such as artists and theatre companies. These extend pupils' confidence and basic skills and prepare them for the next stage of learning. The good range of extra-curricular activities is very popular with the pupils. One boy enthused, 'I've learned loads at gardening club.'

Since the previous inspection, improvement has been satisfactory. School leaders acknowledge that their practice has benefited from the significant outside support of the Intensive Support Programme over the last three years. This has strengthened the school's capacity to set itself on the right road to improving achievement, especially as the school improvement plan now identifies that raising pupils' progress, especially in writing, is the top priority. Regular tracking of pupils' progress is now an established feature and the school has begun to make some good use of this information; for example, by setting and reviewing individual targets. However, senior leaders are not as well informed or as influential as they could be, as some key elements in their work have been led by the local authority's staff in recent years. While senior staff have a broadly accurate view of the quality of teaching, and identify common areas for improvement, this understanding is not based directly on their own observation and reflection. There has not been enough concerted action to improve pupils' progress in a rapid, sustainable way, especially in English. For example, the approach to planning, marking and challenge for the more able pupils lacks consistency.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more regular opportunities for independent work in order to raise standards in writing in Key Stage 2.
- Ensure that there is more planned, consistent challenge for all learners.
- Ensure that more effective and regular monitoring of all aspects of work is undertaken to quickly raise pupils' progress and standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where activities and teaching set out to tackle weaknesses in speech and language, and personal and social skills. By the end of Year 2, standards remain well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. As they get older, and especially in Key Stage 2, there is a minority of pupils whose work lacks pace, persistence or concentration and, while still satisfactory, progress slows.

At the end of Year 6, results in mathematics and science have been rising for the past three years. Results in English, however, remain very low overall, with standards in writing exceptionally low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils, through the support they receive, achieve in a satisfactory way alongside their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, effectively fostered by a variety of activities across the curriculum, including a good emphasis on pupils learning about cultures different from their own. Pupils' enjoyment of learning in

lessons is satisfactory overall, with younger pupils showing greater enthusiasm and making better progress. The behaviour of learners is satisfactory. Pupils understand the importance of personal safety and how to live and work together as citizens, both topics developed well within the curriculum. The school systematically applies a wide range of measures to promote attendance and to address absence. When the school's context is taken into account, the attendance levels are broadly in line with national expectations.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Learning activities are well matched to pupils' individual needs in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Throughout the school, teachers include pupils in their learning by sharing with them the lesson objectives. The interactive whiteboards are used well to provide a range of visual and other stimuli that enhance learning. In Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils respond well to the teachers' consistent expectations of behaviour and most work well together. However, pupils learn less well in English than in mathematics and science, and teachers have not yet found a way around this to stimulate learning and progress in writing. There is not enough challenge or sufficient opportunities for independent work to enable all pupils to reach their full potential. The sizeable number of support staff provides well for pupils during their individual work in lessons but the value of their support is not used to the full.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although the revised curriculum is not yet bringing about the desired improvement in pupils' progress it is well matched to the needs of pupils, including those in the Foundation Stage. The school has taken important steps to provide more support for pupils' progress in English. The introduction of a phonics scheme is improving pupils' early reading. The recent introduction of a writing scheme is providing valuable additional support with pupils' writing, the curriculum area that the majority of pupils find most difficult and enjoy the least. Pupils' personal safety and citizenship education are developed well within the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides outstanding levels of care for pupils. Those at risk for whatever reason are quickly identified and supported and the school works successfully with outside agencies. The 'Nurture Group' significantly improves pupils' self-confidence in Key Stage 1 by skilfully and sensitively bridging the gaps in their basic experiences. The learning support group is effective in helping older pupils cope with the school's expectation of good behaviour and learning.

While the impact has yet to be reflected in examination results, academic guidance is now strong and linked well to the pupil tracking system. Pupils have individual targets in reading, writing and mathematics and an understanding of the next steps once their targets are met but the impact of this is yet to show in test results.

The school complies with government guidelines on the care, health and safety of its pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and senior staff give sound educational direction to the school. The benefits of external support are that they are becoming more sharply aware of how to evaluate their performance and set priorities for improvement. However, managers are not yet effective enough at drawing key insights and conclusions from information from a variety of sources, such as progress tracking, work scrutiny and lesson observations. As a result, the skills to identify and monitor effective action to ensure consistent improvement are not as strong as they should be. There are several discrepancies between the school's view of itself and inspection evidence. The school did not sufficiently take into account the good start children have in the Foundation Stage when judging provision there to be only satisfactory. Inspectors judge it to be good. However, it was too generous in rating personal development to be good, not giving enough weight to attendance and how pupils' enthusiasm for learning wanes as they get older. The school is still in need of objective support to set its improvement agenda and so leadership and management overall are satisfactory rather than good.

The contribution of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school, based on a very good knowledge of their local community's needs. Their knowledge of the key improvement areas is less secure.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so friendly and helpful. It was very useful to hear how much you like your school. We really enjoyed our visit and want to share with you what we discovered. We think your school is satisfactory with some things that are good about it.

What we liked most about your school.

- You get a good start in the Foundation Stage.
- The school cares well for you, based on treating all of you as individuals.
- You are happy and feel safe in school.
- There are a lot of trips, visits and clubs that you enjoy.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- Build up your confidence and speed as writers by giving you more opportunities for writing on your own.
- Make sure that the work is planned at the right level for all of you to show how well you can do and make sure that your efforts are assessed accurately.
- Come up with an agreed set of practices, in all classes, aimed at raising the speed at which you learn.

You are a credit to your school. Keep working hard and making the most of your time in school. We wish you every success in the future.