

Clitheroe Pendle Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119161
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313202
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	George Crowther

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	286
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Anna Banki
Headteacher	Mrs Alison Callon
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2004
School address	Princess Avenue Clitheroe Lancashire BB7 2AL
Telephone number	01200 423539
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. Its social context is generally more favourable than most schools, but there are pockets of disadvantage. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds, with small groups from Pakistani or Polish backgrounds who are mostly at the early stages of learning English. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average. A new headteacher joined the school four weeks prior to the inspection. The school has the Activemark and has gained the Healthy Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Pendle is a good school with some outstanding aspects. It is a happy, purposeful place where the pupils enjoy their education and the staff encourage them to do well. The great majority of parents are very pleased with the school and say it is doing a good job. This is confirmed by inspection findings. A typical parental comment was, 'The staff work hard to create a very positive environment in which the children can enjoy their learning.' The new headteacher is determined to sustain the school's existing strengths whilst promoting an even sharper focus on improving pupils' achievement further. She has good support from a committed team of staff and governors. As a result of these strengths, the pupils achieve well and by Year 6 they are confident learners, who reach significantly above average standards, with good levels of academic, and excellent personal skills.

Children get a good start in the Reception classes. Good teaching and enjoyable, practical activities capture their interest and help them to make good progress in all aspects of their learning. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils continue to make good progress, responding to good teaching and building well on their basic skills. Lessons are interesting and the quality of teaching is good, which helps pupils to build their skills quickly. A dip in pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 last year has been tackled successfully. For example, better teaching in science has improved pupils' achievement considerably.

The pupils enjoy school immensely and talk enthusiastically about the rich range of activities both in and out of lessons. Their excellent behaviour and very positive attitudes to work support their learning effectively. Relationships are excellent and pupils of all ages mix together happily. The pupils have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and they are safety conscious. They make an outstanding contribution to the school community, for example through the pupil panel, which monitors aspects of school life such as behaviour in the playground. Pupils have a good understanding of cultural diversity through links with schools in other parts of the world. A rich and varied curriculum helps pupils to enjoy their learning and achieve well in many subjects so that they are well prepared for the future. Levels of care, guidance and support are good.

Good leadership and management are sustaining the school's existing strengths and actively seeking improvements. The senior staff team have a clear focus on raising standards and are pursuing developments determinedly. Systems to monitor pupils' progress, however, are not used consistently enough across the school to ensure that potential underachievement is dealt with quickly. Self-evaluation is accurate but does not always explain the reasons for strengths and weaknesses clearly enough. Nonetheless, the school's existing strengths, and its recent track record of improving pupils' achievement, create a good capacity to improve its work further. The school provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start school with skills that are typical for their age. Teaching is good and enables children to make good progress. By the end of the Reception year, children's attainments are slightly above the level expected for five-year olds. Teachers have a good understanding of how these young children learn and plan a good variety of practical activities. This makes learning exciting, as was clearly evident when the children examine the chicks they have nurtured.

Relationships are warm and encouraging so that children feel safe and confident to take part in all activities. They are not afraid to make mistakes and teachers use these attributes effectively to extend learning. The outdoor space is secure and attractive. The wonderful natural wooded area was used well for a safari adventure that included spotting and recording different animals. Leadership is effective in planning a rich curriculum and ensuring children settle well when they start school. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory but the process of monitoring children's progress from entry to leaving is not rigorous enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that systems for monitoring pupils' progress are consistent across the school so that potential underachievement can be identified and tackled.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with standards that are typical for their age and by Year 6, have achieved well to reach standards that are significantly above average. Current standards in Year 2 are above average. Last year, standards in Year 6 dipped to average and national measures of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 indicated that pupils had not done well enough, particularly in science. The school has tackled this dip in performance well. School data show that pupils in the current Year 6 have made good progress and their attainment is now significantly above average and particularly high in science. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. Their needs are carefully identified and their progress is tracked systematically. As a result, some of these pupils make outstanding gains in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils feel safe, they thoroughly enjoy school and attend well. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite activities and display very positive attitudes to learning. A typical comment was, 'I like the lessons because they're interesting and challenging, and you're never quite sure what will happen next.' Pupils are friendly and polite, and their behaviour is impeccable. Relationships are excellent. One pupil said, 'Everyone gets on well together at our school because we are all friendly', which was clear during playtimes and lunchtimes. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The day-to-day life of the school and the curriculum, including links with schools in the Czech Republic and Japan, give pupils a strong understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. The pupils understand matters concerning their well-being. They realise that a balanced diet and exercise are important for good health. The school has an Activemark award for its commitment to sport and is recognised as a Healthy School. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community through many extra responsibilities and the respect they show for each other and their teachers. Well developed academic and personal skills give them a good platform for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils make rapid progress because the quality of teaching is consistently good. Interesting work is well matched to meet pupils' individual needs. A strong emphasis on well planned practical lessons, from the Reception classes to Year 6, captures pupils' interest and stimulates their learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 and 4 learned a good deal about habitats and mini-beasts when they went pond dipping in the school's wildlife area. Teachers make clear to pupils what they should learn in a lesson, giving added purpose to the work, and they check on learning at the end. They explain new ideas in a lively way that makes pupils keen to learn. Occasionally, teachers spend too long talking to the whole class and the pupils' attention begins to wane. Equally, teachers do not always do enough to ensure that pupils are getting on quickly with their independent work. Teaching assistants provide good support for small groups and individuals. The school has sound procedures for assessing pupils' progress. In some cases this information is used well to identify pupils who may be falling behind, and to provide extra support. Across the school, however, the collection and use of assessment information is not consistently focused on promoting pupils' progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum, with outstanding features, meets the needs of all the pupils and helps them to enjoy their learning. For example, the curriculum is adapted well for pupils who have learning difficulties, the more able, and those learning English as an additional language, which helps them to learn confidently and quickly. Good attention is paid to improving pupils' basic skills but these are not used and developed sufficiently through work in other subjects. Pupils have responded well to recent initiatives to enrich the science curriculum and particularly enjoy extra practical activities. For example, the pupils spoke with great enthusiasm about Dynamic Duncan who visits school to involve them in experiments. An excellent range of additional activities enriches the curriculum significantly. Opportunities for sport, learning French or Spanish, music, the arts and a variety of visits and clubs, create a rich breadth of curriculum. In addition, there are strong links with the local community. For example, pupils have created trails and labyrinths in local parks and quarries, enhancing their learning and enjoyment.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The outstanding quality of pastoral care has a significant impact on pupils' all round development and personal achievements. Very positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents ensure that each child is happy, safe and ready to learn. A typical comment was, 'If you have a concern, the teachers are always there to help.' Bullying is extremely rare and pupils have absolute confidence that, if it were to occur, it would be dealt with. Child protection and other procedures to safeguard pupils' health, safety and well-being are in place. Outstanding support for vulnerable pupils, drawing well on links with outside agencies, ensures they learn well. For example, nurture groups give some pupils a much needed boost to their self-esteem. Academic guidance is generally good but there are inconsistencies in the support given to pupils in different classes. Targets to guide pupils' learning and teachers' marking of pupils' work are not always used effectively to ensure pupils know how to take the next step in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management help pupils to achieve well and to develop outstanding personal qualities. The new headteacher understands the school's existing strengths and is determined to build upon them by promoting an even greater emphasis on improving aspects of pupils' achievement. She is well supported by an experienced senior staff team that has already led school improvement effectively. Self-evaluation is accurate and gives the school a clear basis for improvement. There have been successes in boosting pupils' achievement; better teaching and learning in science have raised standards significantly. Leaders have also ensured that, through good team work, the very positive environment for pupils' learning has been sustained during a period of staff changes. Suitably challenging targets promote pupils' achievement. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored carefully but there are inconsistencies in the way leaders monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. Governance is good. Governors are very supportive of the school and know the school's strengths well through their active involvement. They are not as well informed about the progress being made on areas for development.

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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?	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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is 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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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 the 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

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.

Annex A

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Clitheroe Pendle Primary School, Lancashire, BB7 2AL

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school to find out how well you are doing. It is a really happy school where you all work hard and enjoy your lessons. You helped us to find out that yours is a good school.

From talking to lots of you, it is clear you really enjoy being at school and everyone gets on well together. You said you like almost everything about your school and particularly the wide range of interesting activities both in and out of lessons. For example, Year 3 and 4 really enjoyed pond dipping in your wildlife area. We think you do well with your work because you enjoy school. You behave exceptionally well, moving around school sensibly and paying attention in lessons and assemblies. The group of children I spoke to on Tuesday lunchtime, including some of your pupil panel, were particularly impressive in the way they expressed their views.

From visiting some of your lessons and looking at your work, it is clear you are making good progress and your science work has improved this year. Your teachers make lessons interesting, which helps you to learn quickly. You say there are lots of interesting things to do at school, and we agree. We were particularly impressed by the recorder players, the wide range of clubs and the special activities, such as the labyrinth some of you built at Clitheroe Castle and the replica in the school grounds. You have lots of jobs around school, particularly the older children, which help you to make an outstanding contribution to your community. You said you feel the staff look after you very well and we agree. Your new headteacher and the staff are doing a good job in helping your school to get better.

They are now going to further improve your learning by being clearer about how you are doing so that they can help you if you are falling behind.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection of your school.

Yours sincerely

George Crowther

Lead Inspector