

Shadsworth Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119221
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313223
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jackie Gallagher
Headteacher	Mr Ian Mason
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Arran Avenue Blackburn Lancashire BB1 2ET
Telephone number	01254 698016
Fax number	01254 694440

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a slightly smaller than average junior school serving an area of acute social and economic deprivation. More than half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British background, though there is a small number of pupils whose home language is not English. Almost half of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has close links with the Infant School and High School, and jointly funds a social worker across the community. The school is also part of an Excellence in Cities Project with other local primary schools and the High School.

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 where pupils are motivated to learn and achieve well in a welcoming, secure and interesting environment. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with their children's progress and the level of care they receive. One parent wrote of how proud she was that her children went to Shadsworth Juniors and how much they had grown in confidence. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is improving. They understand how to keep healthy and the school achieved Healthy Schools Status this year.

The school is led and managed well. After a considerable period of uncertainty, the school is experiencing much needed stability following the appointment of a new headteacher three years ago. The recent improvements in behaviour and standards stem from the excellent leadership of the headteacher, complemented well by his deputy and senior staff. The school's analysis of its work is used well to set priorities and plan improvements. Actions to improve behaviour have been very effective and personal development is good. The improvements in pupils' attitudes are helping to raise standards, though the school recognises that more needs to be done in continuing to raise standards, particularly in writing.

Pupils enter Year 3 with skills that are significantly below average. They make good progress during their time in school. Nevertheless standards are below average when they leave. The results of the national tests for Year 6 have shown steady improvements over the past three years. Whilst standards were below average in the 2007 tests, there had been significant improvements in each subject from the previous year. Additional staff training and support in small groups led to a good improvement in the number of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics from 51% to 70 %.

Teaching is good and pupils learn well. Lessons move at a good pace to keep pupils involved. Work is marked regularly, although the quality of marking is inconsistent between classes. The curriculum is good, with a clear focus on developing basic literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons. However, there are limited opportunities to develop these skills, and also computer skills, in other subjects. The range of activities on offer outside the classroom is good and enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment. Pupils are cared for well and all the recommended procedures to safeguard pupils are in place. An outstanding feature is the availability of a generous number of skilled support staff to help individuals achieve well. The effectiveness of individual targets to help children improve their literacy and numeracy skills is developing well.

The school makes outstanding efforts to work with a variety of outside agencies to provide maximum benefit for the pupils. The involvement of the assistant headteacher with other primary schools and the High School is helping to smooth pupils' transition from Year 6 to Year 7 and minimise disruption to learning. The school's participation in the 'Language for Life' project is proving effective in helping pupils to develop specific language skills, for example in mathematics.

The school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Recent improvements in behaviour, standards and the learning environment indicate the school has a good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and develop writing, numeracy and computer skills in other subjects in order to raise standards.

- Ensure that, through teachers' marking, pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Rigorous assessments when pupils start in Year 3 show that their skills are at a low level. Good records confirm that pupils make good progress and achieve well during their time in school because of good teaching and an excellent level of support. Nevertheless, standards are below average by the time they leave the school. Standards have risen steadily since 2004 because of the school's successful priority for improving pupils' behaviour and attitudes, and improvements in teaching. In the 2007 national tests in Year 6 standards were below average, particularly in writing. There were good improvements in all aspects from the previous year, and extensive staff training led to a good rise in the number of pupils achieving the expected standard in mathematics from 51% to 70%. Within the caring and very supportive environment, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils whose home language is not English achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils respond well to the school's high expectations and the good example of respect and courtesy shown by adults. Pupils are polite, friendly and behave well in class and about the school. They understand the benefits to health of a well-balanced diet, exercise and the need to avoid the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. They know how to keep safe, for example wearing helmets and sensible clothes when riding a bicycle. They clearly enjoy school and join in all activities enthusiastically. Attendance is improving steadily and is now broadly average. Pupils respond well to responsibilities such as being part of the school council and make a good contribution to the wider community when joining in activities such as the local festival. The regular visits to the High School smooth their transition to the next stage of learning though some pupils are hindered by their limited basic skills.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness are good. The current community project that involves work and activities with a local school with many more pupils from minority ethnic groups, support their growing understanding of life in a multi-cultural society as well as the traditions and beliefs of others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good relations with pupils and establish a calm atmosphere for learning. Pupils' behaviour is managed very well as staff apply school rules consistently and with minimum disruption to learning. These aspects of lessons enable pupils to feel safe and confident in answering questions and in making their own contributions. Teachers make good use of time and resources, including the interactive boards, to enhance the delivery of lessons. This engages pupils' interest and encourages them to concentrate. Through a sustained programme of training, teachers have a good level of expertise in what they teach and how they teach. Support staff are very effective whether working with individuals

or small groups so that pupils' understanding and skills are improved, enabling them to take a full part in lessons. Whilst teachers monitor their pupils' work, the quality and depth of marking is inconsistent and does not always guide pupils in what they need to do to improve. The school makes good use of visitors to school, many of whom are specialists in their own field, and out of school visits, in order to enrich pupils' experiences and develop their cultural awareness.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is good provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons, though there are limited opportunities for pupils to use and extend these skills, particularly writing, in other subjects. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. The personal, social and health education curriculum is good and contributes well to pupils' good personal development. The displays of pupils' work around school demonstrate a good level of breadth across subjects, with a good variety of art work evident. The sports curriculum has been extended recently in order to promote healthy lifestyles through regular exercise. There is a good range of out of school clubs, many of which give further opportunities for exercise. Older pupils have many opportunities to enhance their learning when they work at the secondary school to which they will eventually transfer. Visiting and working in this environment serves to prepare them for the future and ease their move to the next stage of education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. Many parents commented on the good quality care and individual attention their children receive. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils and child protection are robust and all requirements are met. Potential risks in and around school and during visits are carefully assessed in order to keep pupils safe. An outstanding feature of the school's provision is the priority given to providing a very high level of skilled support where needed. This has resulted in good behaviour and improving standards. In support of its strong commitment to inclusion, the school is helping to fund a social worker to extend the support for vulnerable pupils and their families. The school has a good behaviour policy with a clear set of rules which guide pupils' conduct well. Pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy to help them improve, and the effectiveness of these is developing well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher three years ago has brought much needed stability to the school following a prolonged period of changes in leadership. Recent improvements in the school are founded on the excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the senior management team. The decision to concentrate initially on improving behaviour has been successful. Attitudes and behaviour are getting better and this is helping to raise standards. The school is using the accurate monitoring and evaluation of its work well to bring about improvements. For example, issues identified in the analysis of test results have led to further staff training and booster groups which have in turn led to an improvement in mathematics. The school recognises that more needs to be done to raise

standards further, particularly in writing. The school's targets for pupils in Year 6 are realistic. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and the needs of the school. They are supportive whilst retaining the ability to pose pertinent questions to the managers. The improvements in behaviour, standards and the learning environment over the last three years indicate a good capacity to improve further.

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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	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 disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

17 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Shadsworth Junior School, Blackburn with Darwen, BB1 2ET

Thank you for making Mr Watson and myself so welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you and your parents that Shadsworth Juniors is a good school and we think it is getting better all the time. You play an important part by behaving so well and working hard in lessons. We were pleased to see that more of you are coming to school every day and I hope that this continues.

We know that you enjoy school because you told us so and also because you seem so happy there. Many of you stay after school to take part in the good range of extra clubs and activities. The 'Children in Need' activities seemed great fun and I hope you managed to raise a lot of money.

The school takes good care of you and all the adults give you a lot of extra help when you need it. This makes sure that you can join in lessons well and make good progress. The lessons seem interesting and the teachers explain work carefully so that you know what to do.

When we inspect a school we look for ways in which even good schools can improve. We think that you could be given more chances to use and improve your writing, numeracy and computer skills in other subjects. Teachers will help you all more to know exactly what you need to do to improve in English and mathematics through their marking of your work.

Best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Shirley Herring

Lead Inspector