

Stanley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131070
Local Authority	Blackpool
Inspection number	315706
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Joy Byrom

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	655
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mr Craig England
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Wordsworth Avenue Blackpool Lancashire FY3 9UT
Telephone number	01253 761022
Fax number	01253 839384

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is much larger than average and serves a relatively disadvantaged area of Blackpool. It opened in September 2006 as an amalgamation of the separate infant and junior schools. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also above average; the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. There is a 10 placement provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties. Before and after school care is provided by an outside provider. There is an independent Nursery on site.

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 which is improving in some important areas. The headteacher and his senior team have done well in the last year to create an orderly and efficiently run school. Pupils benefit from good personal support within a settled and secure environment. There is a good focus on raising pupils' personal development and academic standards. The vast majority of parents are happy with the school and value the dedication and professionalism of the teachers. Pupils tell us that their teachers are very kind but firm and make lessons fun. Pupils develop good levels of personal development. They are polite and considerate, have very good attitudes to learning and display high standards of behaviour. They know how to keep themselves safe and healthy. Pupils become confident, friendly and articulate, and are keen to take on responsibility. They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. The emphasis the school places on personal development begins in Reception with well planned and monitored activities to ensure every child develops the language and social skills needed to get the best from their education.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Teaching and learning are satisfactory which results in pupils making satisfactory progress overall. In Reception, teaching is good and children make good progress after starting school with skills just below what is typical for their age. They start Year 1 with standards similar to those expected for their age. In 2007, standards at Year 2 were broadly average, although standards were below average in writing. At Key Stage 2, standards at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were broadly average. The proportion exceeding expectations for their age were below average, particularly in science. The school's focus on raising standards is already improving standards of writing but more needs to be done to raise achievement in mathematics and science. The school has recently introduced good procedures for tracking pupils' progress so that teachers can identify pupils who are not doing as well as they could. The intention is to use the information to allocate additional support where it is most needed. However, at present, this is not yet effective because some teachers are not yet experienced enough in using the new systems to assess pupils' academic performance accurately. This hinders the ability of teachers to deal with incidents of pupils' underachievement. This is most noticeable in mathematics and science, where achievement is held back. The school's curriculum is good and enriched by very good provision for French, physical education (PE) and music. Enterprise education and extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, contribute significantly to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. The school has forged very successful links with schools in Africa and the European Union.

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. There is a shared determination amongst staff to raise academic standards and achievement. A good ethos exists throughout the school which gives pupils positive attitudes to learning and results in good quality relationships with others. Challenging targets are set for academic standards across the school. The weakness in assessment is currently hindering the ability of staff to monitor progress towards the targets so that standards are pushed higher. Given the current educational direction, the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve in future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The Foundation Stage leader provides clear guidance and effective support to her colleagues who work well together as a team to deliver good teaching and meet the children's needs. As a result, children make good progress in all areas of their learning. Children start school with skills just below those typical of their age and most reach the goals expected of five year olds when they start in Year 1. The teaching focuses particularly well on helping children to make choices and work independently. Physical skills are promoted strongly in the well resourced outdoor area. Consequently, goals are often exceeded in their personal well-being and physical development. Children have a lot of fun in their learning and are well motivated because staff plan stimulating activities that capture their imaginations. In activities linked to the story of 'The Gingerbread Man' the children were very excited when they retold the story using puppets they had made. Very occasionally, expectations are not high enough in some activities led by teaching assistants. In particular, their questioning skills do not always provide enough opportunities for children to extend their speaking and listening skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement of pupils in mathematics and science by improving the quality of teaching in each subject.
- Tackle incidents of underachievement amongst pupils by ensuring that all staff are secure and accurate in their judgements of the pupils' performance.
- Strengthen the strategies used to monitor the progress of the school towards the academic targets set for pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards are close to national expectations when pupils start Year 1. In 2007, standards at the end of Year 2 were similar to those found nationally in reading and mathematics, but lower in writing. This shows that progress was satisfactory during the two years of Key Stage 1. In 2007 standards at age 11 were broadly average, although the proportion exceeding the national average was below average particularly in science. Better progress is now underway in science but further progress is required. Pupils in Key Stage 2 made satisfactory progress from their starting points. Evidence gathered during the inspection indicates that standards are currently broadly average throughout the school. In mathematics, progress is not always as good as it might be due to missed opportunities in the planning and teaching of lessons. Pupils do particularly well in PE and French. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Behaviour is almost always good and frequently excellent. Pupils move about sensibly and with consideration for others. They are polite and

friendly. Most pupils feel there are few instances of bullying, although vulnerable pupils are more concerned about this than their peers. Pupils enjoy school and apply themselves to their learning with enthusiasm. Attendance is just below average. Safety talks and good attention to emotional well-being ensure pupils understand how to look after themselves and stay safe. Pupils understand how to eat healthily though they do not all practise this. They understand the importance of exercise and most pupils take advantage of the excellent sport provision. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community. They demonstrate growing maturity and confidence by helping with duties around school, for example as assembly prefects, house captains and school council members. They also run the school bank and support a number of charities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. By the end of Year 6 pupils are confident, articulate and mature. The satisfactory academic standards combined with their good social skills gives pupils a sound foundation for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features in the Foundation Stage. Most lessons are characterised by good classroom relationships, very good behaviour and often an eagerness to learn. Many lessons are well planned with suitable alternative work for pupils of different ability; they have sufficient challenge for all pupils and proceed at a brisk pace. Occasionally pace is slow and the tasks provided do not demand enough of pupils, most noticeably in mathematics. In a few instances, pupils are muddled and this is not attended to as deftly as it might be. In mathematics, lessons do not always follow through coherently from one topic to another and opportunities to develop higher thinking skills are missed. Teaching in science was particularly good when led by the specialist science teacher but less effective in other science lessons. Whilst there is much painstaking and supportive marking that encourages pupils and makes corrections, some pupils do not receive enough individual guidance to ensure good achievement. Some activities, for example in PE and French, elicit pupils' exuberant participation: learning is then at its best and enjoyment is palpable.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and is improving. It is well balanced and includes two hours of PE a week for all pupils. Specialist provision for music, PE and French helps pupils to make good progress in these subjects and contributes to their enthusiasm for learning. Some aspects of the curriculum are particularly strong, such as links with schools in other parts of the world and pupils' involvement in enterprise schemes. Whilst pupils make satisfactory progress in English, mathematics and science, the school has begun to strengthen weaker aspects of these subjects. For example, pupils are now given more opportunities to improve their writing skills and to apply these skills in other subjects. Good computer resources enable pupils to use their growing information and communication technology (ICT) skills to support work in other subjects. A well-planned programme of personal, social, health and citizenship education contributes to pupils' good personal development. The school provides a very good range of activities outside lessons, including opportunities to learn to play a musical instrument and excellent provision for sport. These activities are popular, well attended and help pupils to extend their interests and to develop healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support is satisfactory. There is a strong commitment of care for all pupils through good relationships and this contributes well to their personal development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and external agencies are used effectively to enhance this provision. There are robust systems for ensuring pupils are kept safe including all statutory checks. Pupils are well supervised at all times. The school's systems to check on pupils' individual progress are not yet fully effective. Not all assessments of progress are accurate or supported by reliable evidence. This particularly applies to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities where their progress in lessons is not monitored robustly enough. As a result teaching is not always accurately matched to individual needs. Targets are set for pupils and while these are in the early stages of development, many older pupils understand what they need to do to improve further. Those pupils with specific speech and language difficulties have recently been successfully integrated into mainstream classes.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management, including governance, are satisfactory. The headteacher and new senior team have a shared, clear vision for raising standards and achievement of all pupils. Together they have successfully unified the school and its staff following amalgamation of the infant and junior schools in 2006. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and areas for development is detailed and largely accurate, and there are action plans in place to address weaknesses. Over the last two terms the school has developed procedures for tracking pupils' progress and improving teaching, but these are not yet fully effective. Whole school and class targets for 2008 are challenging and senior staff meet regularly with class teachers to review pupils' progress. Underlying weaknesses in the assessment of pupils' work reduces the effectiveness of such targets. Staff training and development is effectively targeted on meeting the school's priority of raising standards by improving teaching.

The new governing body is committed to carrying out its responsibilities effectively. Governors are keen to learn more about their role and to become more involved. Day-to-day management is effective and the school runs smoothly. Staff and resources are deployed appropriately and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
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	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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?	3
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?	3

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?	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 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	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

21 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Stanley Primary School, Blackpool, FY3 9UT

Mr Bennetts, Mr Crowther, Mrs Mawer and I very much enjoyed visiting your school and talking to many of you. Thank you for making us so welcome. We are very pleased that you enjoy school so much and appreciate your teachers who look after you so well.

We judged your school to be satisfactory, although we recognise it is improving. We were impressed by your good personal development. You are confident and express yourselves clearly. You take a keen interest in your learning and your behaviour is very good. We liked the way you move about the school quietly and showed consideration for others. You are very polite. You know that exercise is important to keep yourselves fit and healthy and many of you take part in after-school sport. You are not so keen on healthy eating! You know how to keep yourselves safe and are keen to take on responsibilities. You work well together and help each other. You make good progress with your work in Reception and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2.

To help you to do even better, we have asked the school to improve the planning of lessons so that they meet all of your needs, in particular in mathematics and science. We have also asked the school to develop a clearer picture of how well each of you are doing in your work. This is so that if you find work difficult, you get the help you need.

You can be part of the school's efforts in raising achievement by working with your teachers and continuing to try hard in lessons. I hope you will continue to work with enthusiasm and to make visitors so welcome. I wish you good luck in the future.

With very best wishes.

Joy Byrom

Lead inspector