

# Lowtown Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107862
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	336966
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Honoree Gordon HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	200
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs S Wood
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms R Howells
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kent Road Lowton Pudsey LS28 9BB
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors spent around half of their time observing learning. They visited 11 lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with the headteacher, the Chair of Governors, staff who hold positions of responsibility in school and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress, records relating to the care of pupils and notes of meetings held. They looked at 57 parental questionnaires and some questionnaires from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the fall in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2
- the points for improvement from the previous inspection: writing, mathematics and teachers' use of assessment
- the achievement of different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of policy and practice on safeguarding.

## Information about the school

Pudsey Lowtown School is a smaller than average sized primary school with one class in each year group, and is situated in a small town between Leeds and Bradford. The school intake is almost entirely White British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs varies in each year group but is typically around one in five. The school holds a number of awards: the Stephen Lawrence Award at level 3; Advanced Healthy School and the Inclusion Chartermark.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

The overall effectiveness of Lowtown Primary school is satisfactory. The school's work has a number of good aspects: the curriculum; the care, guidance and support provided for pupils; and the procedures and practice to help safeguard them. The school is held in high esteem by its parents and the local community. Engagement with parents and carers to support their children's education and the pupils' contribution to their school and local community are outstanding.

Most of the outcomes related to pupils' personal development are good. Pupils' attendance is above average and their behaviour is good. They often get keenly involved in their lessons. Achievement and enjoyment are satisfactory. Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly average but has declined since the last inspection. There has been some instability of staffing and the quality of teaching, though satisfactory overall, is variable. Pupils make satisfactory progress, but their progress is uneven across the year groups. The Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with particular strengths in children's personal development: children get off to a flying start. Progress in later years of the school is slower, though it accelerates significantly in Years 3 and 6.

The school's self-evaluation is largely accurate, however the inspectors do not agree with the school's assessment of its overall effectiveness as 'good'. This is because of the slipping standards and the inconsistent quality of teaching. The school knows where teaching needs to improve and has put in place a close system of lesson observation, mentoring and support to effect improvement. Inspectors could see the benefit this was beginning to bring during the inspection.

The school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve further. Leaders and managers have had some measure of success in addressing the points for improvement listed at the time of the previous inspection: standards in mathematics at Key Stage 1 have risen and are now average. Writing is improving, though pupils have not yet caught up to where they should be and some high-attaining pupils could be challenged more. Teachers' use of assessment to help guide teaching and learning is better, but not as effective in some year groups as in others.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the consistency of teaching across the year groups to ensure that pupils make faster progress by:
  - enhancing teachers' use of assessment in Key Stage 1 so that pupils are

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suitably challenged

- matching teaching strategies better to the needs of particular groups of pupils and individuals
- checking that the way lessons are structured uses time wisely to promote pupils' engagement in lessons and so fosters their learning
- Improve attainment in writing further by:
  - making sure all pupils know what the next steps or targets are for improving their writing
  - raising the expectations of high-attaining pupils' writing, and providing those pupils with the skills needed to produce high-quality writing.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Current attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, as observed in lessons, is at least average for most pupils, with a good number of pupils working at above average standards. Standards are strongest in science, with a good proportion of pupils gaining higher than average levels, and in reading, where attainment is above average. Attainment in mathematics is broadly average, and has improved in Key Stage 1 since the previous inspection.

Attainment in Key Stage 1 has risen overall and is now broadly average. Attainment at Key Stage 1 in mathematics is significantly above average. Data show that attainment in writing is below average. The school's concerted drive on writing over the last 18 months is beginning to show some benefit in that writing skills are improving in all classes. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress in writing but have some way to go yet in some of the year groups to catch up to where they should be.

Pupils enter school with broadly average attainment. They make satisfactory progress, so that by the end of Year 6 their standards are also broadly average. However, the trend for attainment has fallen from above average at the time of the previous inspection. The spread of ability levels, the growing proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and instability in staffing lie behind this falling trend in both attainment and the rate of progress that pupils make.

Pupils' progress over the year groups, though satisfactory overall, is uneven. The school's tracking data and inspectors' observations show that currently progress is fastest in the Early Years Foundation Stage, in Year 3 and in the final year. In a number of lessons seen, where teaching was at its strongest and most exciting, pupils were making good progress.

The progress of different groups of pupil, such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to their peers. The school provides good support for these pupils to help them achieve. Some individual pupils and groups make good

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progress, for example where specific support has been targeted at a particular group of pupils who are disadvantaged or at risk of underachieving. The school's data show that a number of these pupils are making good progress to reach nationally expected levels by the time they leave school. The school is successfully closing the gap between the achievement of boys and girls: the progress of boys and their attainment has improved since the previous inspection. However, higher-attaining pupils could be more challenged in some lessons, so that they make faster progress.

Pupils have good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and are particularly keen on leading a healthy lifestyle, with many walking to school. Pupils contribute widely to many local activities at different levels, including where they might influence decisions, through lobbying on local issues. For example, school council expressed concerns about the volume of traffic near the school and traffic lights are being installed. The pupils work on Fair Trade links directly into the Pudsey Fair Trade group. Pupils act as anti-bullying 'ambassadors' to promote their message city-wide. At the time of the inspection the school choir was recording a CD to sell to aid the Haiti earthquake appeal.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The quality of teaching is too variable. Where it is good or better, learning is well-planned and responds to pupils' different learning styles. Lessons proceed at a good pace, with activities suitably matched to different ability levels or needs. Pupils are clear about what level they are working to and how to reach the next one. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed to help move learning on. In an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson observed, there was a real 'buzz' as excited pupils worked in groups, on laptops and in pairs to calculate areas of shapes. All pupils, regardless of ability, were suitably challenged and supported.

Where lessons are less successful, time taken for some activities is too long and so learning slows down. Tasks are not sufficiently tailored to individual pupils or groups. Teachers' use of assessment to help them plan lessons pitched at the right level has improved since the last inspection, but this was not evident in all classes.

The curriculum provides lots of opportunities in music and drama, visits, residential and first-hand experiences, such as making bread. These play a large part in promoting pupils' development and in their evident enjoyment of school. International week, arts week and reading week all contribute effectively to wide-ranging experiences. The religious education curriculum broadens pupils' horizons with regard to other faiths and cultures. Information and communication technology (ICT) is established well across the curriculum. Teachers make effective use of ICT in lessons to engage pupils in learning and to help their understanding

A programme of intervention in Key Stage 1, typically in Year 2, is accelerating pupils' progress in reading and mathematics. The Every Child Counts project is having an outstanding impact on the progress of a small number of those pupils who have special educational needs. Support for pupils who have special educational needs is good overall and enables them to achieve as well as other pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school's leaders and managers embed ambition and drive improvement satisfactorily. Many outcomes for pupils have remained good since the previous inspection, but attainment has dropped recently. In their questionnaire responses parents gave a resounding vote of confidence in the school. Records show that their voice is heard and influences decisions taken. A new internet 'learning platform' increases their opportunities to communicate and to work together with the school to

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enhance their children's learning.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination well and the promotion of community cohesion is good. Much effort goes into successfully promoting a harmonious local community, with a proactive approach to raising pupils' and their families' awareness and understanding about other religions and cultures. The school takes a strong stance on racism and anti-bullying is high-profile. Pupils are proud of this and say that they feel safe in school. Safeguarding procedures are robust: the school is quick to step in and seek outside support, if necessary, for any vulnerable pupils. A number of links with other schools, agencies and professionals operate effectively to enhance the curriculum for pupils or to support their overall well-being.

Governors support and challenge the school to improve further. They are developing more formal approaches for evaluating some aspects of the school's work.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is good, with some outstanding features. Leadership and management are good. The teacher and setting are used justifiably as models within the local authority, but progress is not yet outstanding in the majority of the six areas of learning.

Attainment on entry is broadly at typical levels and children progress well over the year. At the end of the Reception year, attainment in physical development and attitudes to learning are high; in other aspects, such as writing and social development, it is broadly average. Writing tends to 'dip' on entry to Year 1. The school is now putting greater



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emphasis on the development of these weaker skills.

A real strength of the setting is teachers' use of day-to-day assessment to devise what children need to do next. Relationships are excellent and the children are enthusiastic about learning. Often, behaviour is first-class. The teaching assistant and class teacher work well together. The outside space is well used in most weathers and the inside space is used effectively as a workshop for exploration. Children are used to taking care of the resources and acting responsibly.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents' views of the school are strongly positive. The responses to the questionnaires are echoed in the school's own surveys.

A minority of parents seemed less convinced about the effectiveness of management in the school. This was discussed with the headteacher who explained that there have been some differences of opinion at times between the school and a few parents, for example, over the school's policy for including all pupils in school activities. Inspectors consider that the school gives due regard to the views expressed by parents when determining policy.

A very small minority of parents had concerns about behaviour. Inspectors judge behaviour as good overall, both in and out of lessons, allowing effective learning to be taking place. When the pace of lessons slows, occasionally some pupils get bored. It is here that the school is rightly concentrating its efforts - to ensure that lessons meet pupils' needs well and that the level of challenge is appropriate. Pupils say that behaviour is well managed by teachers and is not an issue.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lowtown Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	67	18	32	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	67	19	33	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	54	25	44	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	60	22	39	0	0	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	58	24	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	56	23	40	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	58	24	42	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	40	27	47	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	49	26	46	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	39	24	42	5	9	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	39	28	49	5	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	25	44	20	35	8	14	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	53	26	46	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

# Glossary

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

## Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



3 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lowtown Primary School, Pudsey, LS28 9BB

I am writing to thank you for your help when I visited your school with two other inspectors recently and to tell you our views about the school.

Your school is satisfactory overall and a number of aspects are good. One or two parts of the school's work are excellent. For example, we think that the school and your parents work very closely together to help you do well. Also, you really get involved in your community, in what is going on in school and around, in Pudsey and beyond. That helps you learn how to get on with other people, which is important. Your parents told us in the questionnaires how pleased they were with Lowtown.

Here are the main things we found out about your school:

- Standards at the end of Year 6 are average.
- Your progress is satisfactory. In some lessons your progress is good.
- Your writing is improving. You are now making satisfactory progress.
- Your mathematical skills have improved since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is good: there are lots of exciting things for you to do.
- The staff care, guide and support you well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is good.
- Your behaviour is good. We can see that you are keen to learn.
- Your attendance is good. You told us that you enjoy coming to school.
- You are keen to be healthy; it was good to hear how many of you walk to school.

Teaching is satisfactory, but some lessons are better than others. In the best ones you were kept really busy, everyone had work to do that suited them and you were clear what you had to do to improve your work. We have asked your headteacher to see how to make all the lessons like that, so your progress can be even better.

Whilst the standards you achieve in writing are starting to improve, we think they could still be much better, so we have asked the school to improve them further. You can help by working really hard to improve your skills in writing.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Honoree Gordon

Her Majesty's Inspector

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