

Heap Bridge Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105797
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	377300
Inspection dates	9–10 January 2012
Lead inspector	James Kidd

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael O'Neill
Headteacher	Marcus Cockcroft
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
School address	Heap Brow Heap Bridge Bury BL9 7JP
Telephone number	0161 7645686
Fax number	None
Email address	head@heapbridge.rochdale.sch.uk



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Introduction

Inspection team

James Kidd

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons or part-lessons, taught by six teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, four members of the governing body, the learning mentor, a representative of the local authority, subject leaders and senior staff. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' workbooks, internal and external pupil progress data, school improvement planning and documentation in relation to safeguarding and child protection. The inspector also took account of 47 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 63 completed by pupils in Key Stage 2 and 25 returned by teaching and support staff. No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available when planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This school is a smaller than average primary school and serves the village community of Heywood on the border of Rochdale and Bury. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well-below average but is increasing over time. Less than 1% of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above that usually found. The percentage of pupils supported at school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school has reached, and on occasions exceeded, the floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, for the past three years. Heap Bridge Primary is a nationally-accredited Healthy School and a UNICEF Rights Respecting School. It also holds the Activemark and Eco Schools (silver) awards. There have been several staffing changes since the previous inspection, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher.

The school hosts breakfast and after-school clubs which are run by a private provider. These receive a separate inspection and a separate report, which is available on the Ofsted website.

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	3
Achievement of children	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of children	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The trend of improvement in attainment since the previous inspection is above the national picture. As a result, attainment is now broadly average and the achievement of all groups of pupils is satisfactory and improving. The school recognises, however, that pupils' progress in writing, although satisfactory, is not improving at the same rate as it is in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory but is improving apace. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are strong. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities receive well-focused support and make the same progress as their peers as a result. There is now greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school, but the school is aware that this needs to improve further, for example in relation to challenge, particularly for higher-attaining pupils and in the development of cooperative learning opportunities for pupils in the classroom.
- Most pupils are well behaved, conduct themselves sensibly around the school site and are well engaged in their learning. They are proactive in combating bullying. They say that the school teaches them the dangers of bullying in all its forms and add that bullying is rare. Safeguarding procedures and practice fully meet national requirements and the school also places great emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional well-being.
- Perceptive leadership from the headteacher and senior team and impressive levels of commitment from teaching, support and administrative staff ensure that there is a clear and shared vision for how the school should move forward. School self-evaluation is accurate, ongoing, and undertaken as a matter of routine. As a result, the school continues to improve and members of the perceptive governing body hold leaders to account with increasing rigour.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' progress and raise their attainment, particularly in writing, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to reinforce their writing skills in all subjects of the curriculum
 - ensuring that the extra support that pupils receive to improve their writing meets their particular needs more fully.

- Continue to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that challenge is realistic for all groups, particularly for higher-attaining pupils
 - embedding the use of assessment information to provide activities which motivate and meet the learning needs and interests of all pupils more closely
 - further develop group and paired work to ensure that pupils can act as extra learning resources for each other
 - finding more effective ways of sharing best practice in teaching across the school.

Main Report

Achievement of children

Pupils look forward to their lessons and enter the classroom with smiles on their faces and eager to learn. They show good levels of engagement in lessons and are more than willing to show their work to visitors. They demonstrate good skills in information and communication technology and, as early as the Reception class, use computers with confidence.

Children enter the Reception class with skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematics which are below those expected for their age. They make good progress and achieve well in all areas of learning and enter Year 1 with average levels of attainment.

Attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly average in both reading and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress and achievement from pupils' starting points and inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils' progress is accelerating. The progress of pupils from all groups is at least satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities make the same progress as their peers because of the focused support they receive. Gaps in the performance of different groups, for example pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, are narrowing compared to all pupils nationally. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are happy with the progress their children are making.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is in line with that usually seen. They display average levels of fluency and most can decode complex vocabulary, yet not always understand its meaning. By the end of Year 6, their reading skills are broadly average in terms of fluency, intonation and understanding of text. Pupils show increasing enthusiasm for reading and many read independently at home. The school is aware, however, that pupils' skills in writing are not developing at quite the same pace as they are in reading, partly because the extra support pupils receive does not always fully meet their particular needs.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and is characterised by realistic challenge and many opportunities for children to learn both independently and also collaboratively with their peers. Teaching across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and improving and there are examples of good practice in all classes. The majority of questionnaires returned by parents and carers indicate a high level of satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive. Teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively and mutual respect abounds. For example, teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with their pupils, who, in turn, have a high regard for the adults who work with them; pupils comment, 'The grown-ups help us when are we stuck with our work and explain how we can reach our targets.'

In the best lessons, a Year3/4 literacy session, for example, there is a good balance between support and challenge and a continuous emphasis on what pupils need to do to meet their learning objectives. These lead to pupils having the utmost confidence in the staff who work with them and ensure that they are not afraid to express their views or even to make mistakes. Similarly, in a Year 6 English lesson, accurate ongoing assessment of the progress which pupils were making led to an amendment of the learning objectives partway through the session, thus ensuring that the content was more relevant to pupils' experiences.

The quality of teaching, however, is not always consistent across the school. For example, challenge, particularly for higher-attaining pupils, varies and is not always as good as it should be. On occasions, these pupils receive work which does not require them to think deeply enough about the subject matter. Similarly, although there are good examples of cooperative activities, paired and group work are not developed sufficiently well to ensure that all pupils regularly benefit from the working with others.

The school monitors the progress of pupils well, individually, in groups and in classes. It is, therefore, able to identify any underachievement rapidly and provide good support to ensure that pupils come back on track to meet their targets. Sometimes, however, it is apparent that this assessment information is not always used well enough to ensure that activities motivate all pupils and meet their learning needs and interests closely enough. Marking is completed regularly and pupils receive detailed advice on how they can improve their work.

Behaviour and safety of children

Pupils say with confidence that they are safe in school and that their classmates, 'playground pals' and the adults who work with them look after them well. Parents and carers agree and over 90% of those who returned the questionnaires expressed the view that their children believe they are safe in school. A typical comment was, 'This is a caring school with a lovely environment and a dedicated staff. My child loves coming to Heap Bridge.' Pupils pay testament to the emphasis the school places on their safety and happiness and make particular mention of the support they receive from adults when they have worries or are unhappy. Indeed, the school places a strong emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being and has introduced a vulnerable children's register, which is regularly updated and the impact of which is evaluated carefully. Attendance has improved markedly over the past 12 months and is now above the national average. Punctuality is also a particular strength.

Through the school council in particular, pupils are proactive in their rejection of bullying in all its forms. For example, the school council was instrumental not only in recommending the introduction of a confidential 'bully box' but also in its inclusion on the school website. Furthermore, pupils say that the school teaches them about what forms bullying can take and the dangers of each of them. They make reference, for example, to the visits of police officers who inform them of the dangers of cyber-bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that there have only been two examples of information placed in the 'bully box' since May 2011. They add, however, that if bullying does occur, it is handled effectively by both teaching and support staff.

During the inspection, pupils' conduct around school was invariably good and there were few examples of off-task behaviour in lessons. Parents and carers, staff and pupils are of the view that behaviour has improved over the past three years and also that pupils always represent their school in the local community with maturity.

Leadership and management

Accurate and honest self-evaluation and an overriding concern, shared by all staff, to raise standards and achievement have led to good improvements since the previous inspection in pupils' progress, attainment and attendance. The capacity to improve further is, therefore, good. Staff pay tribute to the perceptive and supportive headteacher and senior leadership team and comment that detailed feedback on lesson observations and the emphasis on focused professional development continue to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Subject leaders are proactive in promoting improvements in their particular areas and new and less-experienced staff benefit from their sensitive support and guidance. Indeed, staff at all levels share the same vision for how the school is to develop. They do not, however, rest on their laurels and they recognise that greater consistency in teaching quality is of the essence if achievement and attainment are to continue to improve. They are also attempting to find more effective ways of sharing good practice in teaching across the school.

The governing body is fully supportive of the school's direction for development and members challenge leaders with increasing rigour. The school promotes equality of opportunity well and has effective strategies to tackle discrimination on the rare

occasions this may occur. Safeguarding and child protection arrangements are secure, regularly reviewed, and fully meet national requirements.

The good curriculum is broad and balanced and provides pupils with a good variety of extra-curricular and enrichment activities which are popular and well attended. The impact of the curriculum on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils have a secure understanding of cultures and religions which are different to their own. Pupils raise money each year for a range of national and global charities and have recently chosen to support the World Wildlife Fund and, as part of the school's Rights Respecting status, UNICEF. Their considerable eco work, is just one more example of their impressive social and moral awareness. The formal curriculum effectively supports pupils' academic performance. However, pupils would benefit from more opportunities to apply their writing skills in more of the subjects they study.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the child's work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well children acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the children's attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



11 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Heap Bridge Village Primary School, Bury BL9 7JP

Thank you for your warm welcome when I came to inspect your school. You were very polite and I enjoyed talking to you. I am particularly grateful to the members of the school council who talked to me on Monday lunchtime. You have every reason to feel proud of how you represented yourselves, your families and your school.

Heap Bridge is a satisfactory school and it is improving all the time. You make satisfactory progress in your lessons and the standards you reach in English and mathematics are about the same as most other pupils in the country. Your artwork, including the mosaic, around school is a joy to see. You behave well and feel safe in school. You have many opportunities to look after each other and the school council always has ideas about how to improve the school, for example, putting the 'bully box' on the website. The teaching you receive is satisfactory and all the adults in the school take good care of you. You are particularly grateful to adults who, you say, help you when you have any worries.

The headteacher and the staff are always looking for ways to make Heap Bridge even better. I have asked them to help you improve your writing by giving you more chances to practise your writing skills in all your subjects and by making sure that the help you get in writing is exactly what you need. I have also asked them to make sure that all of you, especially those of you who sometimes find the work easy, are always challenged to do your best. I would like them to give you more opportunities to learn in pairs and in groups and to give you even more activities which you really enjoy. You can help bring about improvements, in your writing, for example, by practising it as much as you can at school and at home.

Thank you again for your kindness to me during the two days of the inspection, and thank you also for your questionnaires which show just how proud you are of Heap Bridge.

Yours sincerely

James Kidd
Lead inspector

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