

Horton Mill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105679
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	377278
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2012
Lead inspector	Robert Pye

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sajid Hussain
Headteacher	Sue Crowson
Date of previous school inspection	15 January 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Robert Pye
Clarice Nelson-Rowe

Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by two additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 15 lessons or part-lessons, taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with pupils, teachers, support staff and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, looked at school development planning, progress monitoring documentation, and also pupils' workbooks. Inspectors also analysed eight questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 22 completed by staff and 117 returned by pupils in Key Stage 2. No responses from the online questionnaire (Parent View) were available to the inspectors.

Information about the school

Horton Mill is an average-sized primary school. Most of the pupils attending are of Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has met government floor standards during the past three years. The School has the Basic Skills Award, Activemark and Green Flag Eco status.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well as a result of consistently good teaching. An exceptionally strong emphasis on its promotion means that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy school and are well prepared for the next steps in their education. They feel safe in school, both physically and emotionally, and state confidently that the work of all the adults in the school is instrumental to this sense of security.
- Improvements since the previous inspection have consolidated the school's good performance. In particular, setting arrangements for mathematics have significantly accelerated the rate of progress for pupils at Key Stage 2. However, the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 do not always reach the high levels they should.
- The headteacher and her team have created an inclusive ethos. The individual needs of each pupil are understood well. Careful tracking of each pupil's progress informs the use of effective small group work to develop pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics and ensures that they have the social and emotional skills to get the most from the teaching.
- Pupils behave well. They are encouraged to work and play together and this fosters good relationships. A consistent approach to behaviour management and the effective use of additional adults mean that the complex needs of a very small number of children are managed sensitively in a nurturing environment.
- Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery class lacks the sharpness needed to inform teachers how to plan more challenging activities in order to develop children's communication skills further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve achievement to be outstanding in Key Stage 1 by consistently challenging the more-able pupils to achieve as highly as they can by the end of Year 2.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage Nursery class by using assessment to help plan more focused activities to promote communication skills.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' achievement is good and is reflected in their high-quality display work found throughout the school. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with levels of skills and understanding that are well below those typical for children of their age. Very few speak English when they start school. They make satisfactory progress in the Nursery and good progress in the Reception class. However, although progress remains good throughout Key Stage 1, very few pupils reach higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2. Attainment improves, but is still below average by the end of Year 6. Pupils, however, make good progress over their time in school compared with their starting points, particularly in mathematics, where setting arrangements enable a sharper focus within each lesson. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress also and are narrowing the gaps to their peers and other children nationally. In most year groups, pupils receive good-quality teaching and a wide range of strategies that develop their communication skills and help them to learn well and make good progress in most lessons. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, pupils learnt to use phrases to support a point of view and applied them with passion to debate whether animals should be kept in zoos.

Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 deliver a structured programme to encourage young readers' grasp of the sounds that letters make. By the age of six, many pupils are well versed in decoding words for reading. However, most speak English as an additional language and many are at the early stages of learning English their understanding of the text lags behind and so attainment is still below average at this point and also by the end of Year 6. Pupils say they love to write and progress well as a result of a multi-sensory approach to introduce new vocabulary. For example, pupils in Year 1 learnt how to describe fruit by using words associated with sight, smell, touch and taste. Bespoke support to meet individual learning needs ensures that pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and potential barriers to learning are minimised, thus improving their progress and attainment at a good rate.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good typically. Teachers are skilled facilitators of learning and make sure that individual children receive the right amount challenge to help them make good gains. Pupils say they find marking and feedback useful and are confident in the help they receive, a view which is echoed by their parents and carers. Teachers have high expectations and plan exciting lessons to stir pupils' imagination and enthusiasm. 'Lessons are fun and I love to write because it makes me feel alive'; this sums up the enthusiasm many pupils demonstrate in their work. Teachers are skilled at questioning and consistently apply a clear philosophy to promote language development through multi-sensory experience and many different forms of discussions across the curriculum. For example, in Year 2, the teacher produced a drawing of a giant, responding to descriptions offered by the pupils. In the Reception class, imaginative planning enabled children to enjoy learning about shopping and transport through role play.

Throughout the school, the planned curriculum provides frequent opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively. The activities often make a significant impact on the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development also. This was very apparent in a Year 4 science lesson, when pupils used Newton meters to investigate the pull load of different objects. This was followed up with deep reflection on the wider meaning of 'Influences in their lives'. No common weakness is evident in teaching. Rather, there are variations in the skill levels with which teachers apply particular elements of their practice. The variability does not detract from a pattern of good teaching across all year groups, but prevents teaching from being outstanding overall. In the Nursery class, the provision is not tuned finely enough to accelerate children's learning, especially their communication skills.

Teaching assistants play a significant role within the school, supporting teaching in the classroom effectively. They act as bilingual interpreters and deliver successful intervention programmes in reading, writing and mathematics to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, adding value to their progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Teachers adopt a consistent, effective approach to behaviour management. This helps pupils to understand what is expected of them and they respond well to this by being polite and courteous to each other and with the adults in school. Many of them were confident to talk about their experiences of school and share their views with inspectors. They say that behaviour is typically good and that bullying in any form is not a problem because it would not be tolerated by adults and generally pupils get on well together. In lessons, good teaching fosters good behaviour and attitudes to learning. The curriculum provides substantial opportunities for pupils to explore their rights and their responsibility to ensure their actions do not remove the rights of others. Older pupils demonstrated maturity in the way they reflected upon the needs of others and expressed confidence in the 'kind' adults around them to keep them safe.

Positive attitudes spill over to larger gatherings. Inspectors observed a well-managed and uplifting assembly, during which the pupils sang together, their palpable

enthusiasm stirring up positive emotions before playtime. Similarly, pupils socialised well together while eating their healthy school meals or packed lunches.

Pupils take on responsibilities readily, for example, the 'Purple Pelicans' help younger children. Likewise the anti-bullying team and anti-racist team reinforce these messages to other pupils as well as being involved practically in maintaining a low level of incidents. Pupils, parents and carers are very positive about the good behaviour and safety. In discussions, pupils were able to describe how to stay safe when crossing roads or playing outside after school hours. They had a good understanding associated with the use of modern technology, such as computers and mobile phones. Attendance remains low, but is improving. The school has a strict attendance policy, yet, despite the school's continued and strenuous efforts, a small number of families take extended leave during term time.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leaders communicate their ambitions for continued improvement through clear priorities supported by appropriate actions to realise them. They place the principle of 'every family matters' at the heart of the school's work and this stance is supported robustly by the governing body and all staff. Staff share responsibilities well and have a strong voice in shaping the school. They have been instrumental in developing a broad and balanced curriculum designed to provide interest and challenge. The curriculum is good and makes a significant contribution to the pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, pupils experience diverse cultural music with classes and from visits to Bridgewater Hall.

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching, coupled with the impact of well-targeted training, the effective deployment of staff and good support with the right amount of challenge from the governing body, contribute to the school's good capacity to improve. The impact of work to accelerate progress in mathematics, to meet the social and emotional needs of potentially vulnerable children and to support the special educational needs and/or disabilities of others have been particularly effective. School leaders use assessment and progress tracking information well to identify where pupils need additional support and this ensures that the best use is made of the additional adults who provide bespoke support. This means that the school promotes equality effectively and there are no underachieving groups. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated and this underpins the harmonious community.

The school is forward looking. Partnerships with other schools locally enable staff to benefit from shared ideas and others' practice. The links benefit transition arrangements also as pupils move to secondary education. The school encourages parents' and carers' participation in the school community, including those families who are initially reluctant to engage with the school. The welcoming environment, supported by many effective initiatives such as the family room, engages parents and carers in the school community by making them feel valued. Nevertheless, the response to the Ofsted questionnaire was much lower than usually found. Safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements and are satisfactorily managed by the headteacher.

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 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

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 pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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 pupils 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 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.
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.



16 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horton Mill Community Primary School, Oldham, OL4 1GL

Thank you all for your warm welcome when the inspection team visited your school recently. We enjoyed the tour of the school with some of your 'Purple Pelicans'. You were very polite and kind to us. We are also grateful to those of you who came to talk to some of us on Thursday lunchtime. We were impressed with your good behaviour and the way you support each other confidently in class. Horton Mill is a good school. You are right to be proud of it. You are making good progress in your lessons and most of you enjoy learning. By the time you leave school at the end of Year 6, your attainment is below average, but you have progressed well to reach this point. You have a good knowledge on how to stay safe. The adults who work with you care for and look after you extremely well. In turn, older pupils look after younger children very well, too, and accept such a wide range of responsibilities to help run the school. You are not afraid to give visitors advice on how to stay healthy! Your school is skilled at developing your outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are very proud of you and they are always looking for ways to make the school even better. We would like to help them with this, so we have asked your teachers to help you make even faster progress by making sure that some of the more-able pupils in Key Stage 1 reach higher levels by the end of Year 2. For even younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, we would like your teachers to think of more exciting ways to help you learn and develop your communication skills.

Thank you again for your kindness to us. Please keep working hard and looking after each other.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pye
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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