

# Helmshore Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119195
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379749
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Geoffrey Yates

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>	367
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Hayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christine Myers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gregory Fold Helmshore Rossendale BB4 4JW
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates  
Elisabeth Fenwick  
Sheila O'Keeffe

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team visited 26 lessons, observing 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, teaching staff, the Chair and another member of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors also heard 12 pupils read. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at minutes of the meetings of the governing body, the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, pupils' work, and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of 188 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and those completed by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Helmshore is an above average-sized primary school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is similar to that seen nationally. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Healthy School status. The school meets the current floor standard.

There is on-site before- and after-school provision for pupils which is not managed by the school. This provision is subject to a separate Ofsted inspection.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key Findings

- This is an outstanding school. Comments such as, ‘Helmshore is a truly magnificent school.’ confirm parents’ and carers’ very positive views of the school. The school exceeds national targets because pupils, staff and leaders, with the strong support of parents and carers, have high expectations and a relentless focus on wanting to do even better. This stems from the highly effective leadership of the headteacher and the leadership team.
- Pupils make rapid progress and achievement is outstanding. From a starting point expected for their age children get off to an exceptionally good start and achieve outstandingly well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This excellent start is built on effectively, resulting in pupils’ attainment being above average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The leadership and management of teaching is first class resulting in the overall quality of teaching being outstanding. Lessons move at a very fast pace and teachers are highly effective in ensuring that pupils know exactly what they need to do and how to do it.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Incidents of bullying or racial harassment are few and far between, and dealt with exceedingly well. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including when using the internet.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The management of performance is highly effective with a very precise focus on meeting pupils’ individual needs. This is a key element of the school’s success. Teaching is closely monitored leading to effective targeting of staff training. The good curriculum has some outstanding features. However, while very good attention is given to ensuring pupils use and develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills opportunities are sometimes missed in lessons for pupils to apply their good information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.

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

- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills in subjects across the curriculum.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has been consistently above average for the last three years. Inspection evidence shows that this continues to be the case. Attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well above average by the time pupils leave the school in Year 6. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are confident when tackling new or difficult words. Older pupils give up their lunch-breaks once a week to take part in a reading-for-pleasure reading club. Pupils' high level of interest and genuine enjoyment of learning have a major impact on their outstanding achievement. For example, the school's current focus on the work of Janet and Allan Ahlberg ensures a wealth of valuable learning experiences for all pupils. Throughout the school, learning in lessons is effective because pupils are very keen to contribute. They very eagerly discuss their work and take on board comments made by teachers when their work is marked. Pupils always try to improve on previous best. Older pupils are able to evaluate the quality of their own work with accuracy. They collaborate very well when working with a partner or in a group. They use their reading, numeracy and writing skills exceedingly well. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently incorporate similes into their poetry writing, (and explain what a simile is), linked to a focus on tropical fruits. One pupil in his description of a pineapple wrote, 'It is yellow as the sun on the bottom bit.' In Year 5, some excellent project work focusing on the school's water supply allowed pupils to produce well-crafted information sheets, with one pupil's opening statement, 'Read this and you will find yourself full of useful information. Go on read it!'

On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills are in line with the expectations for their age group. Outstanding learning opportunities in an exciting learning environment, both inside and out, alongside a high level of care mean that they make rapid progress. By the time they enter Year 1 many are exceeding what is expected in all areas of learning. Evidence from the school's assessment data, from lesson observations and from scrutiny of work in pupils' books all confirmed that through the rest of the school pupils, including the more able, progress at a rapid rate in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, achievement is outstanding. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make excellent progress, as a result of the very well-targeted support the school provides for them. All parents' and carers' responses to the questionnaire agreed with inspectors and indicated that they are extremely happy with their children's progress and attainment.

## Quality of teaching

The overall quality of teaching is outstanding with major strengths in planning, in the exemplary use of on-going assessment, in very high expectations as to what pupils can achieve and in the fast pace to most lessons. Marking and feedback to pupils is highly effective. As a result pupils make rapid progress and pupils talk confidently about what they are doing. Teaching assistants provide valuable support especially with regard to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, ensuring their needs are met fully. Parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire strongly agree that children are taught well.

The highly experienced staff use their excellent subject knowledge well to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers make effective use of the planned curriculum by ensuring pupils' own interests are linked well into the chosen topics with plenty of opportunities provided for them to discuss their ideas. There are many examples of provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development being built in well to what pupils are being asked to learn. For example, pupils have researched the life of Mary Seacole and, as a result, have improved their understanding of the importance of caring for others. There are major strengths in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics and pupils are given plenty of opportunities to use these skills throughout the curriculum, but less so their ICT skills. Imaginatively planned learning opportunities, for example, the use of hot seating (a child taking on the role of a character from a book and being asked questions by other pupils) generates high levels of enthusiasm and commitment to learning. In an excellent mathematics lesson in lower Key Stage 2, pupils were actively engaged in exploring different signs to make number sentences. In another lesson, older pupils responded very well to the challenge of writing a letter to a manufacturer, evaluating the properties of a shoulder bag with one pupil ending his letter with the plea, 'I hope you value my opinion.'

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers and teaching assistants provide high-quality, direct teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make), early writing and mathematics, which match individual needs accurately. They plan exciting, purposeful opportunities, indoors and out, to engage and interest children.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Pupils have confidence in the school's procedures for keeping them safe and say they feel very secure at school. This view is confirmed by parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire. Discussions with pupils indicate they understand what constitutes bullying in all its various forms. They are confident that if any aspect of bullying occurs it will be dealt with promptly. An analysis of the completed inspection questionnaires for pupils confirmed these judgements. All pupils felt that behaviour is good, any type of bullying is dealt with well and pupils feel safe in school.

Attendance is consistently above average. Outstanding behaviour is the norm at Helmshore. Pupils know the high standards of behaviour expected of them and meet these even when unsupervised. The school is a very calm and orderly community. In lessons pupils listen attentively, contribute to discussions confidently and work very

hard. Around the school, they play well together and are very kind to one another. Relationships are excellent. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. In lessons and discussions they display a maturity which is frequently beyond their years. They relish the opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school. One pupil described how being a pupil council member made her feel, 'very proud'. She then went on to talk about how successful the pupil council idea to have litter pickers has been.

## **Leadership and management**

The governing body plays an important strategic role and carries out its entire duties very well. Arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. The governing body and leadership team ensure that equality and awareness of diversity are promoted very well. As a result, all pupils are given every opportunity to excel in what they do. Leaders and managers play a very strong role in promoting pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by consistently reinforcing the importance of this aspect of provision through assemblies and lessons.

The headteacher's very successful drive for continuous improvement is shared by leaders and managers at all levels. As a result, pupils make rapid progress with consistently above average levels of attainment by the time pupils leave Year 6. The school has a very strong capacity to maintain and build on the improvements made. This is because it has an accurate view of its provision and a highly enthusiastic staff who are skilful in leading development. The leadership and management of teaching are outstanding. All staff comment favourably about how they have benefited from professional development opportunities to enhance their skills. As a result, the overall quality of teaching has improved from good to outstanding since the previous inspection. Recommendations from the previous inspection report have all been implemented.

The curriculum has some outstanding features, especially with regard to the opportunities pupils are given to use their reading, writing and numeracy skills. However, it is good overall because of opportunities missed for pupils to use their good ICT skills in other subjects. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum is outstanding, resulting in an abundance of exciting and vibrant learning experiences for the children. Over 98% of parents and carers who returned the questionnaires are unanimous that they would recommend this school to another parent. One parent commented, 'The school is a credit to all the teachers and support staff who work so hard to create a positive environment in which children can both learn and grow.'

## 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](http://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.**



15 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Helmshore Primary School, Rossendale BB4 4JW**

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the help you gave us. The pupils from Year 6 who spoke to me during one of the lunch-time breaks were magnificent ambassadors for your school, as were the other children my team spoke to. It was wonderful to see how keen you all are to talk about the work you do in lessons and how well you respond to learning challenges. I will long remember how well the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage work and play together. Across the school it was a delight to see how well you are developing your reading and writing skills.

Your school is right to say that you go to an outstanding school. You behave outstandingly well, get on extremely well together and take tremendous care of each other. You are a credit to your families and your teachers. I think the members of the school council, and those with other responsibilities, do a wonderful job in helping to run the school. I know you are delighted with your school because of comments such as, 'We all get on well with each other.', 'Teachers help us if we are stuck.' and 'If there is any bullying it is dealt with.'

You can help to keep your school an outstanding one by maintaining your above average attendance record and keeping up the hard work. In order to try and make it even more effective I have asked the staff to make sure that, where appropriate, you are given regular opportunities in your classrooms to use your good information and communication technology skills when, for example, you are doing topic work.

Please accept my best wishes for the future, continue to enjoy your very caring school. I hope the school's production of *Mary Poppins* goes well.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Yates  
Lead inspector

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