

Highfield St Matthew's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106450
Local Authority	Wigan
Inspection number	355952
Inspection dates	29–30 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Melvyn Hemmings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Bob Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Tyrrell
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors who visited nineteen lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed 16 teachers and held discussions with a member of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of policies, minutes of governing body meetings, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 104 responses to parents' and carers' questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- How effectively pupils' handwriting and punctuation skills have been improved since the last inspection.
- How well the needs of different groups are met, particularly pupils who are more able.
- The impact of strategies to raise attainment in mathematics.
- The extent to which subject leaders are involved in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The school holds the Activemark award and has achieved Healthy School's 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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. It is a friendly and welcoming setting in which to learn, firmly based within a Christian ethos. Its many strengths include the care and support of all pupils and the way it promotes their personal and social development. The headteacher's clear vision for school improvement is shared by all staff and the governing body, and there is a common commitment to driving up standards. Self-evaluation is accurate and enables leaders to identify the correct areas for development. These include making teaching more consistent between classes, raising attainment in mathematics and science, and making sure all subject leaders are fully involved in promoting improvement. Monitoring and evaluation procedures are not rigorous enough to ensure teachers respond to identified areas for improvement or in making sure all teachers are fully accountable for the progress their pupils make. Action taken to improve pupils' handwriting and punctuation has been successful and attainment in writing has risen to above average. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

The main reason that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall rather than better is the inconsistency in the quality of teaching between classes. Though there are examples of good and outstanding teaching, there is too much that is only satisfactory. As a result, the needs of different groups are not always effectively met, particularly those of the more-able pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are above average in English and are broadly average in mathematics and science. In mathematics, leaders have improved pupils' calculation and quick mental recall skills but have been less successful in developing their ability to solve real-life number problems. Pupils are not proficient in designing and carrying out scientific investigations. They have well-developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT).

The curriculum is enhanced by a variety of enrichment activities. Of particular note is the provision for the performing arts that enables pupils to make good progress in this aspect of their education, particularly in music. The environment for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is welcoming and stimulating. Nevertheless, the outdoor area is not used effectively throughout the day to promote their development and learning. Pupils behave well and are polite and considerate to others. They enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. The care and welfare of pupils is central to the work of the school and this is much appreciated by parents and carers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in mathematics and science to above the national average, by:

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- improving pupils' mathematical problem-solving skills and their ability to carry out scientific investigations
- ensuring teachers are more consistent in setting work that matches the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more able
- making sure all teachers are fully accountable for their pupils' progress.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - rigorously checking that teachers act upon areas for development identified in lesson observations
 - making sure all subject leaders are fully involved in promoting school improvement.
- Use the outdoor area for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively to promote their development across all areas of learning throughout the day.
- 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**

Pupils' achievement from their skill levels on entering school, which are generally typical for their age, is satisfactory. They have positive attitudes in lessons and are keen to learn. Pupils enthusiastically take part in activities and collaborate well to complete tasks. This was evident in a mathematics lesson for pupils in Year 2 when they were engaged in a variety of activities to develop their understanding of time. Pupils read confidently and enjoy talking about books they have read. Their written work is well-presented, with stories and accounts being interesting and imaginative. Pupils have sound mathematical calculation skills but are not adept at applying these to solve number problems. They have a clear understanding of key scientific ideas but their investigational skills are less well developed. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils contribute effectively to school life by diligently carrying out a variety of responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or a school captain. They contribute well to the wider community by taking part in a variety of events, including the church fair, and raising funds for a local hospice. Pupils clearly know right from wrong and are courteous and care for others. Their cultural development is enhanced by a residential stay in France. Pupils say they feel safe in school and on educational visits, and have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' above average attendance and their broadly average attainment shows they are soundly prepared for their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to explain new ideas confidently. They have high expectations of behaviour so that classrooms are calm and friendly places in which to learn. Not all teachers use assessment information effectively to match work to the needs of different groups, especially the more-able pupils. The quality of marking varies between classes and does not always effectively guide pupils as to how to improve their work. Good relationships contribute positively to the progress that pupils make. Teaching assistants are deployed well to support all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

A wide range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including sports and music clubs, adds interest and variety to the curriculum. The opportunities to participate in educational visits, including to Styal Hall as part of their historical studies, and to work with a variety of visitors, effectively extend pupils' knowledge and skills. Residential stays at activity centres in the Lake District successfully promote pupils' personal and social development. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their problem-solving and investigative skills across the curriculum. The school's commitment to encouraging healthy lifestyles is reflected in it gaining the Activemark and being accredited as a Healthy School.

The school successfully ensures the safety and welfare of pupils. All staff are very clear about the steps to take if they have concerns about the well-being of a pupil. Effective links with others, including the school's educational psychologist, make sure extra help for

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individual pupils is available upon request. Good provision is made for individual pupils' medical needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders work hard to enthuse staff in order to bring about improvement. This is exemplified in the way the subject leader for English has acted successfully to raise standards in writing. Not all subject leaders are as effective in promoting improvement. Senior leaders do not yet hold meetings with all teachers to analyse the progress made by their pupils. Consequently, some teachers are not fully accountable for pupil progress. Lesson observations are undertaken but leaders do not rigorously ensure that teachers act upon identified areas for improvement. The school has relevant information about the performance of different groups, which has highlighted the need to iron out inconsistencies in progress between classes, particularly for the more-able pupils.

The governing body is well organised and supports staff and pupils. It is appropriately involved in setting priorities for improvement. The school has effective procedures to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. Training of all staff, especially in child protection, is of good quality. Leaders promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination in a satisfactory way. Partnership with others effectively supports the well-being and development of pupils potentially vulnerable due to their circumstances. It also successfully promotes pupils' skills, such as in sport, music, drama and ICT, in ways the school could not do on its own. Leaders effectively promote community cohesion by encouraging pupils to view their role as not only members of the school, but as members of the local, national and global community as well. The school has highly positive relationships with parents and carers and takes good account of their concerns and suggestions.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff have a sound understanding of the needs of children of this age and work well as a team to ensure they are met. As a result, children make satisfactory progress and reach standards that are broadly average on entry into Year 1. They are happy and show much enjoyment in their activities. This was evident in their role play in the area arranged as a hospital. Children behave well and work and play harmoniously in pairs and small groups.

The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for children to take part in educational visits, such as to Blackpool Zoo. Staff make ongoing assessments of children's progress but do not always use them effectively to challenge children of different ability, particularly the more able. At times, planning emphasises what children are to do rather than what they are to learn. The leader has rightly identified that the key area for improvement is to use the outdoor area effectively to promote children's development and learning throughout the day.

The setting provides a safe and stimulating environment for children. Welfare requirements are fully met and great care and attention are paid to the health, safety and well-being of all children. Good induction arrangements enable children to quickly settle into everyday school routines. The good engagement with parents and carers supports them in making a positive contribution to their children's learning and development.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

A below-average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. The very large majority of questionnaires were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. One comment is typical: 'My child enjoys school very much. The staff are very caring and I am happy to leave my child knowing she is safe and happy.' A few did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There was no such behaviour observed during the inspection and pupils say it is dealt with promptly if it occurs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highfield St Matthew's CofE 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 104 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 465 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	78	22	21	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	71	29	28	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	52	50	48	46	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	68	65	34	33	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	70	67	34	33	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	61	38	37	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	66	34	33	1	1	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)	60	58	35	34	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	59	57	44	42	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	45	43	46	44	10	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	48	48	46	4	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	62	60	41	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	73	70	31	30	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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



1 December 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Highfield St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Wigan,
WN3 6BL**

Thank you for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing the many interesting things you do.

The inspectors judge that your school is satisfactory and that:

- by the end of Year 6 you reach above average standards in English and average standards in mathematics and science
- you have positive attitudes and are eager to learn
- staff look after you well and make sure you are safe
- you enjoy school and in your questionnaires, you said that you learn a lot
- you behave well, and are polite and considerate to others
- the curriculum is enriched by a wide range of educational visits, such as the residential stays in the Lake District
- the headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to help you do better.

What we have asked your school to do now is to:

- improve your ability to solve number problems and carry out scientific investigations and make sure all of you make at least good progress
- ensure all adults who lead subjects are fully involved in helping the school to improve
- improve the use of the outdoor area for children in Nursery and Reception.

All of you are a credit to your school and can help it improve further by continuing to try your best in your activities.

Yours sincerely

Melvyn Hemmings
Lead inspector

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