

Harrop Fold School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133351
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	360494
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Bernard Campbell HMI

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

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	650
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Bernard Pennington
Headteacher	Mr Drew Povey
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors spent the majority of their time in classes, observed 31 teachers and 32 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement plans, monitoring records and safeguarding documentation. They also took account of questionnaires from 175 parents and carers, 391 students and 44 staff.

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

- Levels of attainment and the amount of progress made by students.
- The impact of leaders in driving improvement.
- The contribution of teaching and assessment to the learning of different groups of students, including boys and students known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The factors that may be outstanding in the curriculum and in care, guidance and support.
- The value for money provided by the school.

Information about the school

Harrop Fold is a smaller-than-average secondary school with a specialism in the arts. It moved from a split site into a new building in 2008. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free schools meals is three times the national average. The proportion of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, including those with a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of students from minority ethnic groups is well below average but increasing. A new headteacher was appointed in February 2010. The school has the gained the Healthy Schools award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Harrop Fold is a good school. It has a positive climate and a disciplined ethos. The school community is notable for its good relationships and sense of pride in the improvements the school has achieved. One parent said, 'There has been a big change at the school since my last child attended. Well done!'

Attainment is broadly average. There is a strongly rising trend of improvement from below average levels in the past. In 2010, there was a very large increase in the proportion gaining five GCSE grades A* to C and in the overall level of qualifications gained by students. All students gained at least one GCSE qualification. The proportion that gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, remained below average. However, attainment in English and science improved significantly.

Students enter the school with attainment which is below average. They consistently make good progress in achieving higher than expected results at GCSE. This is the result of high expectations by the school and higher aspirations by students. Students make outstanding progress in English. Girls make outstanding progress overall and they make faster progress than the boys. Lower-ability students make more progress than higher-ability students.

The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and is good. Most lessons are tightly structured, which provides a good direction for learning. Fewer examples were seen of students learning independently. Most students are responsible and thoughtful in using peer-assessment strategies to comment on other students' work and to reflect on their own. However, some have not yet learnt how to engage constructively in this dialogue with their classmates. Marking is done carefully. Teachers make comments which tell pupils how they can improve further, but sometimes these are too generic.

The outstanding curriculum is a cornerstone for students' good academic and personal development and their rapidly improving learning outcomes. Outstanding care, guidance and support are highly effective in overcoming individual barriers to learning. Systems to promote attendance are very strong and have resulted in significant improvement, and attendance is now above average. Behaviour is managed very well, resulting in low levels of exclusion. There is an excellent use of technology to maintain site safety and the school is used locally as an example of high-quality practice in safeguarding.

The school has a very large deficit. In addition, the new school building has significantly fewer students than the school has been designed for, due to surplus places in the local authority. Over the last few years, achievement has risen while staffing and costs have been cut significantly. Despite the effective actions taken by the school to manage resources efficiently, the significant historic deficit and the insufficient use of

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accommodation represent a major shortcoming in the value for money. The school is working hard to further reduce the deficit and has provisional plans to balance the budget.

Concerted action by leaders and managers has significantly improved the quality of teaching and other provision and this has led to a marked improvement in students' achievement. This has also improved the school's reputation in the community. A parent said, 'The school has brought self-respect back to the community and to the students themselves.' The school's self-evaluation is robust and analytical and drives the rapid pace of improvement. Leaders and staff communicate a strong sense of teamwork and a clear ambition to improve further. The school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress by:
 - - ensuring that the progress of boys matches that of girls
 - - increasing the proportion of students that reach Level 6 at Key Stage 3, and that gain A and A* grades at GCSE
 - - reaching the national average in English and mathematics at both key stages.
- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - - improving the consistency of good practice in the use of marking and peer assessment
 - - increasing the opportunities for independent learning, particularly for the more able.
- Develop an agreed plan to eradicate the budget deficit and to make more economic use of the school building.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Students make outstanding progress in English due to well-structured teaching and the imaginative use of practical and visual resources for learning. Students known to be eligible for free school meals make good progress because of their good attendance and the school's high aspirations of what they can achieve. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities make better than expected progress due to the outstanding quality of day-to-day support.

Students make good progress in lessons. They have good attitudes to learning as a result of the positive expectations of order and mutual respect. They behave well in lessons and around the school and are well motivated by the rewards and incentives on offer. They are keen to work cooperatively and respond well to the structured nature of learning tasks. As a result of the good climate for learning, students feel safe to take risks in expressing their ideas and opinions. A minority of students have low levels of literacy and have difficulty with technical words in specialist subjects. Vulnerable students develop confidence and self-esteem in their learning due to the strong care, guidance and support they receive. Some lack the confidence and skills to work independently.

Most students feel safe in school. They are confident that staff will deal with any issues and they value the support from peer mentors. Students respond well to the wide range of health promotion strategies which feature prominently in the curriculum. There is a good

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take-up of healthy school meals. Involvement in extra- curricular physical and leisure activities is growing and a good number cycle to school.

Students made a good contribution to the design of the new building and the curriculum for Year 7. They have many opportunities to engage with the local community through arts projects, volunteering and charity work. They are increasingly involved in formal discussions about their observations of lessons.

Students make good progress in developing their basic skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. They develop personal skills and self-awareness well through the lifeskills provision. They are involved in enterprising activities, such as selling cup-cakes through a local café. Fewer students than average are persistently absent. There has been a significant increase in the proportion staying in education, training or employment at age 16.

Students engage enthusiastically in the good range of artistic, sporting and cultural activities in school and in the wider community. They engage well with those from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. This was shown in their drama performance following a meeting with a refugee from Swaziland. However, students' awareness and understanding of the diversity of cultures in modern Britain is underdeveloped.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
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

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How effective is the provision?

Enthusiastic and energetic teaching motivates students and spurs them on to make good progress in their learning. Teachers provide clear explanations appropriate to the needs of the group and they provide helpful models to show what is expected. Teaching is routinely linked to clear success criteria for learning. Classrooms provide a safe learning environment where students' views are respected. This enables students to take risks in expressing their ideas when they are still at a formative stage. The best planning allows pupils to access higher levels of attainment and so make good progress.

The curriculum is very well planned and is tailored to meet individual student needs and aspirations. Flexible arrangements provide a good choice of courses. Early entry for some qualifications extends enrichment and choice. There is a very good range of vocational options. Students receive careful guidance on these choices. The evaluation of the impact of courses and additional support activities is sharp and ensures that provision is regularly and promptly adapted to student needs. Students' literacy skills are systematically promoted across the curriculum in a highly visible way.

The excellent pastoral team provide a high level of targeted help for individuals, supported by highly effective links with other agencies. This is valued highly by students. Good communication with parents informs them of progress and enables them to support their children's learning. The innovative use of mediation has been highly effective in resolving problems at home and school. One parent said, 'My son had poor behaviour. The school has helped us as a family to address this and we are all much happier.' The impressive system for staff and students to evaluate the progress of vulnerable students is thorough and effective. The school has plans in place to refine the monitoring of students' special educational needs. Strong links with primary schools, supported by many arts activities, makes transition to Harrop Fold a smooth process.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and senior leadership team provide strong direction and successfully communicate high expectations to staff and students. There has been a smooth transition from one headteacher to another which reflects well on the strength of the school's management systems. The headteacher is highly visible and held in high regard by staff and students.

School improvement plans are well focussed on key priorities. Very good use of data analysis and tracking of student progress means that targets are challenging and

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achievable. Evaluation of student performance is detailed and rigorous and results in clearly defined action. Evaluation of the impact and costs of improvement strategies is thorough and incisive. Leaders at all levels are enthusiastic and actively committed to improving results, although a few lack experience. Pastoral and academic staff at all levels take responsibility for the progress of students and work together coherently. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are innovative and employ a good range of strategies for staff to reflect on their practice and improve their performance.

The governing body has a good range of expertise. Governors are well informed about school improvement and play an effective role in questioning the progress and attainment of students. They play a strong role in managing staff reductions and in supporting the development of senior leaders.

Child protection procedures are strong and well-administered and training is thorough. Safeguarding policies are actively reviewed and evaluated. The school keeps a close track of the equal opportunities of different groups and is prompt and proactive in devising provision to enable students to achieve more and to participate equally in the life of the school. It has been creative in responding to the needs of the small but growing numbers of minority ethnic students.

The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion, especially through the wider range of arts projects in the school and local community. Students engage with a wide range of adults in the community and these experiences are brought back and used constructively in the school. Planning for community cohesion is integrated into school priorities and is reviewed regularly. Global links have begun to be established and the school has plans to develop them further. Partnerships are used well to extend students experience and to develop their aspiration, understanding and self-confidence. Systems for communicating with parents are good and the school has grown in popularity with parents, as shown by the increased involvement of parents in school events.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

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Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers that responded to the parental questionnaire was higher than average. Their responses were generally more positive than usual. In particular, almost all feel their child is safe. In addition, almost all think teaching is good. More than in most schools, they believe that the school meets their child's particular needs and that the school deals well with unacceptable behaviour. Most also think that the school takes account of their concerns or suggestions. This strong set of positive responses from parents endorses the inspectors' view that Harrop Fold is a good school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harrop Fold 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 175 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 650 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	83	47	85	49	6	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	86	49	87	50	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	68	39	99	57	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	41	92	53	10	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	84	48	87	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	72	41	87	50	4	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	62	35	91	52	16	9	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)	76	43	87	50	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	78	45	89	51	2	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	41	89	51	7	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	65	37	99	57	3	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	88	50	80	46	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	50	83	47	1	1	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.



30 September 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of Harrop Fold School, Manchester, M28 0SY

Thank you for being so welcoming when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed meeting you very much indeed. We judged that yours is a good school. Many of you responded to the inspection questionnaire and almost all of you said that the headteacher and senior staff do a good job. These were the things we liked most about your school.

Relationships are good and you are proud of your school.

Your attainment is improving and you make good progress in school, especially the girls.

Teaching is good and provides you with clear direction in your learning.

The curriculum provides you with an excellent choice of courses.

Those of you with particular needs get excellent support from staff.

To help the school to improve further, we have said that senior leaders should:

Raise the attainment and the progress by:

- ensuring that the progress of boys matches that of girls
- increasing the proportion that reaches Level 6 at Key Stage 3, and that gain A and A* grades at GCSE
- reaching the national average in English and mathematics at both key stages.

Improve the quality of teaching by:

- improving the consistency of good practice in the use of marking and peer-assessment
- extending the opportunities for independent learning, particularly for the more able.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector

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