

# Hale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111294
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	356888
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Melvyn Hemmings

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jeff Holt
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sandra Mew, Caroline Millington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Hesketh Road Hale Village, Liverpool Merseyside L24 4AN
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 425 3023
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 425 4057
<b>Email address</b>	head.hale@halton.gov.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	5–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 February 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	356888

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who visited 11 lessons or parts of lessons. The inspectors observed six teachers and held discussions with the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, groups of pupils, parents and carers and the School Improvement Partner from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at school policies, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 41 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 a number of key areas.

- How effectively assessment information is used to accelerate progress and raise standards
- Whether pupils who are more able are challenged sufficiently in Key Stage 1
- The extent to which links between subjects have been strengthened
- How effectively the changes in leadership over the last few months have been managed.

## Information about the school

Hale is much smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average, as is that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has been without a headteacher since July 2010, having been led by an acting headteacher until January 2011, and is led currently by two assistant headteachers sharing the acting headteacher role. A new headteacher has been appointed and will take up post in April 2011. The school has gained the Activemark, Artsmark Gold and is also an accredited Healthy School.

**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

Hale is a satisfactory school. It has several strengths and provides a friendly setting in which to learn. The school has worked successfully with the local authority over the last year to bring about improvements. These include raised attainment, increased progress and more effective systems for checking the progress of different groups. Changes in leadership have been managed well to ensure this trend of improvement continues. Senior leaders provide sound educational direction and a clear vision for further improvement. Subject leaders carry out their responsibilities diligently, but their skills in evaluating learning and taking action to bring about improvement are under-developed. The monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to ensure teachers are accountable for the progress pupils make and, consequently, rates of progress are satisfactory rather than good. The governing body is supportive of the school, but not involved fully in holding the school to account for its performance. Nevertheless, leaders and the governing body have worked successfully to ensure that safeguarding procedures are good. Accurate self-evaluation means that leaders know the areas for development. Their plans reflect what needs to be done to improve further and there is satisfactory capacity to take the school forward.

Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards in English and mathematics that are broadly average by the end of Year 6. A weaker aspect of pupils' performance in English is their ability to construct sentences using accurate vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Pupils have sound mathematical calculation skills, but are not proficient in applying these to solve number problems. The level of challenge in Key Stage 1 for pupils who are more able has been improved and is satisfactory. Nevertheless, assessment information is not used consistently to set sufficiently challenging work for different groups, especially the more-able, throughout the school.

The curriculum has been successfully developed to strengthen links between subjects. It is extended by a variety of enrichment activities, particularly in the arts. This has led to the school gaining the Artsmark Gold Award. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the curriculum provides children with practical and enjoyable experiences. Children have ready access to the outdoor area, but it is not used effectively to promote their learning.

Teachers have good relationships with pupils, but do not always have a high-enough expectation of what they can achieve and of their behaviour. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and are adopting healthy lifestyles very well. Their above-average attendance contributes positively to the progress they make. There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care, with staff being committed to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. Parents and carers value the care taken of their children.

Up to 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.

**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

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

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment overall and, in particular, writing and the ability to solve number problems by:
  - – making sure that assessment information is used consistently to challenge groups of different ability effectively, especially the more-able
  - – improving marking to guide pupils better to the next steps in learning
  - – raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve
  - – dealing promptly with any low-level disturbance in lessons.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - – checking the quality of teaching and learning rigorously to ensure teachers are accountable for pupils' progress
  - – developing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring and evaluating learning and taking action to bring about improvement
  - – involving the governing body fully in holding the school to account for its performance.
- Use the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage effectively to promote children's learning through the day.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>3</b>
----------

Pupils' achievement from their skill levels on entering school, which are broadly typical for their age, is satisfactory. They show interest in their activities and work steadily. Pupils are willing to listen to others and respect their views, even when different to their own. They enjoy working together in pairs and small groups. This was evident in an English lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 in which they were exploring texts to find different types of connectives. Pupils enjoy books and read confidently. They write interesting stories and accounts, but lack accuracy in constructing sentences with correct vocabulary, punctuation and spelling. Pupils are not adept at using their mathematical calculation skills to solve number problems. There is no significant difference between the achievements or the learning of different groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils because of the extra support they receive.

Pupils add to the life of the school by taking on responsibilities, such as being a school councillor or a 'buddy' to help look after younger pupils. They are polite, considerate and respect the views of others. Most pupils behave well, but a very few do not act responsibly at times in lessons. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and feel confident in talking to a member of staff if they have any worries. Pupils know well the importance of taking regular exercise and eating a healthy diet. Their above-average attendance and secure basic skills show they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education and their future lives.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

<sup>1</sup> 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 that enables them to explain ideas confidently and demonstrate new techniques. Generally, they manage classrooms well, so that pupils are engaged in their work and little time is lost. Usually, planning ensures pupils of different abilities are given challenging work, but not always, particularly for more-able pupils. Teachers mark work regularly, but comments lack precision in guiding pupils to the next steps in learning. They make appropriate use of a variety of resources, including information and communication technology, to support learning. Teaching assistants are deployed suitably and work diligently to support pupils.

The curriculum is enlivened by a variety of out-of-school activities, including sports and arts clubs. Visits to places of educational interest, including Speke Hall and Norton Priory, along with opportunities to work with a variety of visitors, extend pupils' skills and widen their horizons. Changes to the curriculum have resulted in closer links between subjects. Nevertheless, there are too few opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to practise and improve their writing skills by writing at length. The curriculum promotes pupils' adoption of a healthy lifestyle successfully, as reflected in the Activemark Award and Healthy School accreditation.

The school is a very safe place in which to learn. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have concerns about the welfare of a pupil. The support for potentially vulnerable pupils, because of their circumstances, is an established part of the school's

**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

provision and plays a useful role in promoting their learning and development. Established links with outside agencies, including the educational psychologist, ensure extra support for individual pupils is readily available, if required. The school promotes pupils' regular attendance effectively.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders at all levels establish ambition and drive improvement appropriately by ensuring the school focuses on the priority areas for development. Morale is good and there is a shared commitment to taking the school forward. The governing body discharges its statutory responsibility diligently, is supportive of staff and pupils and ensures they are safe. Its involvement in evaluating the school's performance and promoting improvement is under-developed. Leaders observe lessons, but their evaluations are not yet sufficiently rigorous to improve teaching, learning and progress from satisfactory to good. The promotion of equal opportunity and tackling of discrimination is satisfactory. Senior leaders have relevant information about the progress of different groups and their contribution to school life.

The procedures for safeguarding pupils are comprehensive. There is good vigilance in school and possible risks are identified early and rectified quickly. Leaders promote community cohesion within the school and pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other. The school is working to strengthen this aspect of its work by developing links with a range of community groups beyond the school and the immediate community. The school works diligently, in partnership with a variety of agencies, to support pupils who are potentially vulnerable and this enables them to make satisfactory progress. The school has positive relationships with parents and carers and keeps them informed of the progress and achievement of their children.

**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

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children make satisfactory progress, behave well and show enjoyment in their activities. Staff provide activities that are interesting and practical and often based on children's own experiences. As a result, children are interested and engaged in all that they do. This was evident when they were hiding model dinosaurs in the outdoor area for other children to discover, when learning about positional words, including under, behind, below and above. They are encouraged to make decisions for themselves and this contributes positively to their development as independent learners. Children behave well and work and play happily together.

Staff make ongoing assessments of children's progress, but do not always use them effectively to challenge children of different abilities, particularly the more-able. An interesting range of enrichment activities enhances the curriculum, such as seasonal walks around the local environment and visits to such places as Knowsley Safari Park. Activities provided in the outdoor area do not always link sufficiently to learning that has taken place indoors and do not support development fully across all areas of learning. Welfare arrangements are good, with all necessary steps being taken to ensure children's safety and well-being. Relationships with parents and carers are positive and the school keeps them well-informed about their children's progress.



**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

An average proportion of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Most were positive about the school's work and the efforts of all staff. They were particularly pleased about how the school keeps their children safe. A small minority did not agree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. There was no unacceptable behaviour observed during the inspection. Nevertheless, inspection evidence shows that, occasionally, there is some low-level disruption from a very few pupils that is not always dealt with promptly.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hale Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 inspector received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 103 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	54	16	39	3	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	66	11	27	2	5	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	16	39	21	51	4	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	34	22	54	3	7	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	14	34	23	56	4	10	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	37	21	51	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	32	25	61	3	7	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)	5	12	23	56	4	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	27	21	51	6	15	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	9	22	18	44	6	15	4	10
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	17	25	61	3	7	3	7
The school is led and managed effectively	9	22	21	51	2	5	3	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	34	20	49	5	12	1	2

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and 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 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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



25 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Liverpool, L24 4AN**

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:

- you attain average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6
- staff make sure you are safe in school and on educational visits
- you have a good understanding of how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle
- the curriculum is enlivened by extracurricular activities and visits to places such as Speke Hall and Norton Priory
- your attendance is above average
- adults care about you, as you indicated in your questionnaires
- the headteacher, staff and the governing body are working hard to help you do better.

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

- improve your writing skills and ability to solve number problems and make sure all of you make at least good progress, especially those who find work easy
- check more carefully on the quality of teaching
- make better use of the outdoor area for children in the Reception Year to support their learning and development.

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 (on behalf of the inspection team)

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**