

Higher Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105302
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	355749
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Adrian Guy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Brewin
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Baines
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 24 lessons and 17 teachers. They saw teaching in each of the 14 classes in the school. This included joint observations with the headteacher. They held meetings with school staff, members of the governing body, the local authority representative and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents such as those relating to safeguarding pupils; the teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and their progress; the school improvement plan and documents identified by the school to justify its self-evaluation. Inspectors also took into consideration the 197 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, and those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Whether, given their starting points, all pupils are supported and challenged sufficiently in their learning so that they are able to make consistently good progress and attain the highest standards of which they are capable.
- The standard of personal and social outcomes demonstrated by pupils.
- Whether the school's provision ensures equality of opportunity and enables pupils, particularly those who are less able or who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress.
- Whether, through self-evaluation, leaders, managers and governors have an accurate grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and can demonstrate capacity for sustained improvement.
- Whether provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets the needs of all children and enables them to make at least good progress.

Information about the school

Higher Lane is a larger than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about half the national average. The proportion of pupils from a minority ethnic heritage is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage with a statement of special educational needs is lower than the national average. However, in comparison to most schools, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school outside of the normal times is lower than the national average. Since January 2011, the deputy headteacher has been the acting headteacher and is to remain so until a new headteacher starts in September 2011. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School status, Basic Skills Quality Mark, and the Eco School's green flag award. It also runs a before- and after-school care club.

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

Higher Lane provides a satisfactory quality of education. Some aspects of the school's work are good, including pupil's personal development and well-being, the impact of partnerships with parents, carers and other agencies, the curriculum and the care, guidance and support for pupils. Parents and carers have a positive view of the school and one typical comment stated: 'My child is very happy at Higher Lane and loves coming to school'.

Although some groups of pupils make good progress, for example, children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, most pupils, including those who are less able or have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. In 2010, three quarters of the pupils leaving the school in Year 6 gained the expected level for their age in both English and mathematics. Validated data show that standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. School records, pupils' work and lesson observations indicate that this is currently the case. Overall, from a starting point that is typical for their age, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

The school takes good care of pupils and enables them to make good progress in aspects of their personal development. Successful partnerships with parents, carers and a range of outside agencies promote pupils' health and well-being and result in pupils knowing what they need to do to be healthy. Pupils contribute well to their local community and take full advantage of a wide range of opportunities to get involved in the life of the school beyond the classroom.

Pupils say they feel safe and behave well in school. They are polite, considerate and get on together very well indeed. Where there are incidents of unacceptable behaviour or rare occurrences of bullying, pupils are very confident that these are dealt with effectively by staff. They develop good workplace skills such as teamwork and cooperation and, by the time they leave school, they have well-developed skills in information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are some examples of high quality practice where teachers use information about pupils' progress to provide well-focused activities that are exciting and challenging. However, in the majority of lessons and particularly in Key Stage 1, teachers do not use assessment information effectively to ensure the work pupils are asked to do is sufficiently matched to their needs.

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and monitoring the implementation of school improvement plans are in place. However, leaders are aware that these are not focused fully on demonstrating that actions are having the intended impact. Arrangements for

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safeguarding and the promotion of community cohesion are good and the school has satisfactory policies and procedures in relation to equality and discrimination.

Recent improvements in the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation mean that the current acting senior leaders have an accurate understanding of why standards are satisfactory and what is required to improve them. The leadership team is therefore demonstrating a satisfactory capacity to raise standards further.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils make good progress by:
 - providing guidance and support to teachers so that their assessment of pupils' progress is rigorous, consistent and secure
 - improving the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 1, so that teachers make effective use of assessment information to ensure that pupils' work is carefully matched to their needs
 - monitoring pupils' progress closely to identify and take appropriate action to address any underperformance individuals and groups.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that monitoring focuses more sharply on the learning and progress of all groups of pupils
 - evaluating more fully the impact and effectiveness of the school's actions to bring about improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are well motivated, have good attitudes to learning and respond positively when they are engaged and well taught. These qualities, together with their good behaviour and their cooperative abilities, contribute well to their learning.

When they start, children's skills and knowledge are broadly typical for their age. Pupils progress well when they first enter the school. However, this rate is not consistently maintained across the school. Some pupils do continue to make good progress but the majority make satisfactory progress as shown by the school's own information and inspectors' observations in lessons. This is also the case for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom receive additional support. Pupils achieve well in other areas of the curriculum particularly in their personal and social development, ICT and art, which is evident in some very eye-catching displays around the school.

Pupils participate enthusiastically in school and community life. They take their school council, environmental improvement and fund-raising roles seriously. The Eco team and the whole school are particularly proud of their recently awarded green flag. Pupils participate in a variety of clubs. In learning about healthy living they know about the dangers of alcohol and drugs. Pupils' workplace and other skills that will help them in the future are developed well through themed weeks focusing on enterprise activities. A particular strength of the school is the way pupils cooperate and relate to each other both

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in and out of lessons. Their understanding of different cultures is less strongly developed but their attitudes to living in a diverse and inclusive community are good.

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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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?

In most lessons the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the remaining minority it is good or outstanding. The quality of teaching is stronger in Key Stage 2 than it is in Key Stage 1 particularly where teachers provide well-planned, stimulating and interesting tasks for pupils related to first-hand experiences. Pupils' motivation is increased, for example, when role play is used to link the teaching of English and mathematics to topic work. In the most effective lessons, teachers use assessment information well to ensure that all groups of pupils are working at a suitably challenging level; however, this is not consistent in all lessons. The pace of learning slows when teachers do not leave enough time in lessons for pupils to work independently on interesting, practical and problem-solving tasks. In Key Stage 1, pupils do much of their work in groups, rotating between the teacher, the teaching assistant and working independently. For the independent groups, work is not always pitched at a sufficiently challenging level to enable them to accelerate their progress.

The curriculum provides many good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology skills in a range of very interesting contexts. For example, pupils extend their mathematical skills in work on

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Islamic art; learn how to carry out internet research in a project on pirates and demonstrate a range of good writing skills in a study of the British Isles. A rich programme of extra-curricular activities is enhanced by a very well organised before- and after-school club. A large number of children attend this club and enjoy a wide range of constructive and enjoyable activities in a calm, orderly and safe environment.

Good care, guidance and support for pupils are at the heart of the school's ethos. The impact of the school's supportive and nurturing approach is evident in pupils' strong personal development. Pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances are supported well because of strong links with external agencies. This contributes significantly to their positive personal and social outcomes. The school works successfully with parents, carers and the local authority to promote pupils' attendance. As a result, there is an improving trend in pupils' attendance which is satisfactory overall.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and a safe and caring learning atmosphere, in line with the school's ethos, has been created. The school is effectively led by the acting headteacher and leadership team who show a strong commitment to pupils' well-being and continued school improvement.

The acting leadership team has secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Leaders at all levels carry out their roles well. However, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of school improvement plans is not securely embedded. The governing body provides satisfactory leadership. Governors have the skills and knowledge to challenge and support the school in areas such as health and safety and personnel issues. They are aware of the need to develop their skills to focus on other aspects including pupils' learning and progress.

Staff work hard to keep parents and carers fully informed about what their children are learning in school and how they can support this at home. The home-school diary is an important part of this process, although its effectiveness in ensuring regular two-way communication is not yet fully developed. A recently formed parents' association works effectively in partnership with school leaders to improve the outdoor environment for pupils. Leaders and managers also work successfully in partnership with a wide range of agencies to broaden the curriculum for pupils, especially in relation to physical activities, foreign languages, multicultural education and enterprise. The school works well with the local authority's multi-agency teams to support pupils in very vulnerable circumstances.

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Safeguarding arrangements are good, particularly with regard to child protection and in the provision for out-of-school care where they are especially strong. Site security, risk assessments and health and safety procedures are all appropriate and staff are well trained and vigilant.

The school's inclusive ethos means that pupils are treated equally and learn to respect each other. However, some groups, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do not progress as well as others. The curriculum gives opportunities for pupils to gain wider perspectives and develop positive attitudes and dispositions which enable them to live in a diverse community. There is a strong sense of a cohesive community within the school in the way pupils work together and in their contribution to the wider community.

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

Children make good progress during their year in the Early Years Foundation Stage particularly in communication, language and literacy. This is because teaching is well planned and activities are linked to very interesting topics. Children also make good progress in learning independently. However, the school has rightly identified that they need to improve their skills in taking responsibility for sharing and resolving arguments.

The well-planned curriculum effectively combines all areas of learning within exciting topics, such as super heroes, which increases the children's enjoyment of learning. There is an appropriate balance of adult-directed learning and opportunities for children to choose their own activities, which also have a clear learning purpose. A suitably equipped outdoor area is used very well to develop children's skills in such areas as role play and practical problem-solving in mathematics. Adults use their daily observations of children's

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achievements effectively to plan activities that meet the learning needs and interests of all of the children.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good guidance and support to the team so that there is consistently effective practice in all areas of learning. Together, they provide a safe and stimulating learning environment for the children. The leader uses information about children's outcomes well to identify weaknesses in provision and introduce improvements as required. Recently, it was identified that children's progress in aspects of mathematical development was not good enough. New approaches to learning, including more practical and outdoor activities were introduced and, as a result, children's progress is now good in this area of learning. Staff keep parents and carers well informed about their children's learning in school and how they can support it at home.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of questionnaires received from parents and carers was higher than average. Inspectors also spoke to some parents and carers and considered their responses along with those expressed in the questionnaires.

The very large majority of parents and carers are supportive of the school.

They overwhelmingly agree their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are encouraged to stay healthy. A very small minority disagree that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and there were a very small number of concerns raised about bullying. Inspectors examined these concerns carefully. They found that pupils are well supervised, both in lessons and at break times; any incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with quickly and appropriately and adults encourage pupils to develop good relationships with others.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Higher Lane 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 197 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 456 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	120	61	69	35	8	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	108	55	84	43	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	63	32	115	58	14	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	75	38	100	51	14	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	87	44	101	51	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	64	32	110	56	15	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	73	37	112	57	6	3	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)	73	37	100	51	7	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	81	41	94	48	14	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	31	106	54	19	10	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	51	26	116	59	14	7	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	70	36	106	54	10	5	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	53	81	41	8	4	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	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).

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">■ 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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Higher Lane Primary School, Manchester, M45 7EX

Thank you for welcoming the inspection team to your school recently. You may remember us coming to check how well you are all learning. We learned a lot from watching your lessons, talking to you about your work and life at school and looking at your work.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. The adults take good care of you. Your well-being is really important to them. They help you to grow up sensibly and they give you lots of interesting activities, particularly to help you develop personally and socially. We were pleased to see that you behave and get along together very well indeed.

We could see that many things are improving at your school. For instance, more of you have come to school more regularly than you did last year. Congratulations, too, on the award of your green flag.

These are the things we have agreed with your headteacher and the governors that school should improve next:

- make sure you all make good progress
- make sure that teachers, your headteacher and the governors check carefully that your school improves the way they want it to.

I am sure that you will have some good ideas about how to improve your school. I hope you will contribute them through the school council. Remember, you can all play your part by continuing to work hard and attending school regularly. All the inspectors wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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