

Harwood Meadows Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105194
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377197
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Clare Henderson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gary Harvey
Headteacher	Siobain Barnes
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 10 teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, pupils' progress and attainment, the curriculum, the school's development plan and the way in which the school evaluates its own performance. Inspectors scrutinised the views of staff and pupils and analysed 82 questionnaires from parents and carers.

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

- Whether all groups of pupils and, in particular boys, achieve their full potential in English in Years 1 to 6.
- Whether the quality of teaching is sufficiently challenging in English and mathematics.
- How well literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are applied in other subjects of the curriculum.
- The impact of leaders and managers, including the governing body, to improve learning since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A few pupils are from minority ethnic heritages. The school has gained Artsmark Gold, Leading Parental Partnership, International Schools, Eco School Silver, Listening School, Active Mark and Healthy School status.

A privately run before- and after-school provision is situated within the school grounds. This provision is subject to a separate inspection and a report about its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Key to its success is the outstanding care, guidance and support it provides for all pupils and, in particular, for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Furthermore, pupils' contribution to the school and the wider community, the quality of partnerships, community cohesion and the school's engagement with parents and carers are outstanding. These contribute effectively to pupils' good behaviour, above-average attendance and enjoyment of school.

Pupils begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally below those expected for their age. A concerted effort from all staff to narrow the attainment gap evident between boys and girls in English has paid off. Lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work show standards in mathematics and reading have improved rapidly as a result of initiatives to improve pupils' reading and projects for 'young engineers'. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good and attainment in English and mathematics is above average by the time they leave in Year 6. Teaching and learning is good overall, although teachers do not always use assessment information consistently to ensure tasks in all lessons match pupils' needs and sufficiently challenge all groups of pupils to achieve their full potential in English and mathematics.

Pupils have a good understanding of why they need to lead healthy and ecologically-friendly lifestyles. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They think deeply about the experiences of others; the opportunities that pupils have to learn about children from a wider range of religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds are outstanding. Pupils' learning is enriched well within the curriculum. This is because sports, music and drama are given a high profile. Mathematical and ICT skills are extended well across the curriculum. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in all the subjects they study.

Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate; consequently, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has successfully consolidated pupils' good achievement since the last inspection. Leaders and managers demonstrate a determination to continually improve the school's performance and all staff are strongly committed and involved in monitoring it. The governing body is supportive of all that the school does and continually challenges it to improve further. Outstanding safeguarding procedures are central to all the school's work and contribute very effectively to pupils feeling extremely safe and enjoying school. The school's record of consistently good improvement indicates its good capacity to develop further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring teachers use assessment information consistently to set tasks in lessons which match pupils' needs and challenge all groups of pupils to achieve their full potential
 - providing further opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills in all the subjects they study.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning which are reflected in their above-average attendance and their eagerness to learn. They are keen to answer questions and to have 'a go' at trying things out, particularly when lessons are practical and involve them in research. In Key Stage 2 English and mathematics lessons, for instance, pupils learnt at a fast rate when they were challenged to use thinking, reasoning and research skills to either solve problems in mathematics or to empathise and write about the life experiences of Anne Frank. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to set tasks which challenge all pupils to achieve their full potential. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances make them potentially more vulnerable make good progress. Their work with specialist support staff and teaching assistants develops their self-esteem very effectively and has a positive impact on their learning.

Pupils' achievement is good; they enjoy school and say school is a happy place where 'teachers really help you'. They say they feel extremely safe and that incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils' behaviour is good and often outstanding in class and around the school. However, occasionally, when lessons are not pitched to meet their level of understanding or skills, a few pupils become distracted from their work and this slows their pace of learning. Pupils are very proud of their school and take on an excellent range of responsibilities, such as school councillors, family captains or eco officers, in order to have an impact on the school and wider community. Those on the school council have been very active, for instance, in reviewing how learning can be improved. As a result of their work, interactive whiteboards are being used more effectively to accelerate learning at the start of lessons. Such work extends pupils' business awareness and their concern for others effectively, while preparing them well for secondary school.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. They are able to talk about the dangers of drugs and smoking and are good at making sensible choices about food at lunchtime. They have a very clear understanding of right and wrong and are very thoughtful towards others. They respect people from different backgrounds and are genuinely interested in finding out about their beliefs and cultures.

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	2
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
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	1

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and teachers set high expectations for behaviour. Teachers adopt a consistent approach in the classroom, setting out clear lesson objectives and success criteria which mean that pupils know what is expected of them. There is also a whole-school approach to marking which is, for the most part, adhered to so pupils know clearly what they need to do to improve their work. Most teachers keep up a good pace in lessons and, in the few lessons which are outstanding, challenge pupils extremely well to use their speaking, listening, writing and numeracy skills to produce high-quality work. In such lessons, teachers used very high levels of questioning skill to enable pupils to articulate their feelings and to write powerfully to convey meaning in response to the images and atmosphere created in the room. Additional adults in the classroom are usually deployed well to lead work for different ability groups.

All pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum which, in order to raise attainment, has focused on English and mathematics. The school is currently extending existing links between the different subjects and provides some outstanding specialist provision, for example, in music and drama. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills within all the subjects of the curriculum. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or who may be potentially vulnerable, is outstanding. The school monitors pupils' circumstances carefully, in order to tackle any barriers to learning they may have. Staff are able to call on and use the services of a wide range of specialist outside agencies, with whom they have established outstanding partnerships, in order to help pupils and their families.

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

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Morale is high and there is a strong sense of teamwork where everyone is pulling together to achieve the same goals. This is because the headteacher, ably supported by the senior leaders, has successfully instilled a sense of ambition and drive to improve the work of the school. Other staff with leadership responsibilities have a clear understanding of how to improve the areas for which they are responsible and an enthusiasm to make a difference. The governing body has been involved fully in reviewing school effectiveness and monitoring whether the targets set are sufficiently challenging. This good level of challenge is supported by the outstanding attention given to safeguarding pupils. All the required checks on adults who come into contact with pupils are carried out and risk assessments are extremely thorough. Procedures for child protection are rigorous and staff training is up to date.

The school works well to promote equal opportunities and to tackle discrimination. As a result, the school is a harmonious and inclusive community. This is exemplified by the full participation in school life of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the potentially more vulnerable. Racist behaviour or harassment of any form is not tolerated. The school keeps parents and carers very well informed about their children's education and events at the school. Links with parents and carers are outstanding and this is borne out by the very positive responses within the parents' and carers' questionnaire. Partnerships that attend to pupils' pastoral needs and extend their academic development are outstanding, as reflected in pupils rapidly acquiring skills of resilience, determination and endurance which equip them very effectively for the future challenges life may bring. The promotion of community cohesion is outstanding. The school understands the local community very well. Pupils' experiences and knowledge of other cultures and lifestyles both nationally and globally are outstanding. The school monitors the impact these have on pupils' attitudes well and uses the information effectively to extend pupils' understanding and tolerance for others.

These are the grades for the 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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start in the Nursery, their knowledge and skills are below age-related expectations, particularly in their speaking, listening, communication and social skills. Their achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and, by the end of the Reception Year, most children are working within the goals expected at this age. Children enjoy coming to school, they learn and play well together; for example, when happily role-playing in the home area, on the outdoor pirate ship or when learning their letters and sounds. Such activities are beneficial in extending children's social and communication skills effectively. Children access a good balance of activities they have chosen for themselves and those they are directed to by adults.

A good range of opportunities is provided, both indoors and outdoors, which develop children's physical and creative skills well. This is despite current limited outdoor facilities, although they are soon to be extended. Open access to all areas ensures that the older children help the younger ones to join in play activities and are good role models in encouraging them to share and take turns. Planning and activities are based around extending children's interests. For example, a group of children with a real interest in dinosaurs were totally engrossed as they played imaginatively with a range of dinosaurs. The adult on hand guided them to find out more facts about the dinosaurs by directing them to books available within the room. Outstanding relationships with parents and carers underpin the school's well-thought-out induction and care procedures. Staff know children extremely well and make sure learning is fun. Leadership is good and all adults work together as an effective team. They use observations effectively to track children's progress.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

About 30% of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The vast majority of these were highly positive in their responses. Inspectors endorse these positive views. A few feel that the school does not provide enough activities for the children to engage in at lunchtime. Inspectors followed up this issue and found that pupils also feel they would benefit from more facilities. The school has plans in hand to address this issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harwood Meadows 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 255 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	63	29	35	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	60	73	20	24	1	1	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	48	40	49	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	49	40	49	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	42	51	38	46	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	57	33	40	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	51	37	45	2	2	1	1
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)	39	48	36	44	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	55	35	43	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	38	46	39	48	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	40	41	50	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	48	59	31	38	1	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	66	25	30	1	1	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harwood Meadows Primary School, Bolton BL2 3PS

Thank you for talking to the inspection team and helping us when we visited your school. The inspectors were impressed by how friendly you are and with your good behaviour. Most of your parents and carers we heard from, through the questionnaire, are pleased with everything about the school and say you are happy there.

Harwood Meadows is a good school. It has good teaching and it is well run. The Nursery and Reception classes give you a good start to your education. You enjoy learning, work hard and are keen to try everything and particularly to learn about people who live in other parts of the world or who have different cultural and religious beliefs. You make good progress in your learning and reach levels that are above average by the time you leave Year 6. You enjoy having responsibilities, such as being school councillors or eco leaders. The staff provide outstanding care for each one of you and especially those who need extra help. You say you feel very safe in school and know how to lead healthy lifestyles.

The school leaders want you to achieve well and are always looking to make the school even better, so I have asked them to:

- make sure that all teachers use the information they have about how well you are doing in lessons to consistently plan tasks in lessons which extend your learning so you achieve as well as you can
- give you more opportunities to practise your writing skills across the range of subjects you study.

I hope you will play your part by continuing to work hard and do your best to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Clare Henderson
Lead inspector

