

Halton Lodge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111229
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	378257
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Clutton
Headteacher	Darren Amesbury
Date of previous school inspection	07 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons or part lessons taught by eight different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school improvement planning. They held discussions with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and pupils. The inspectors analysed 121 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 101 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 26 from staff.

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

- How effective strategies are to promote children's language and communication skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- What action is being taken to improve pupils' writing in Key Stage 1 and how effective it is.
- How well pupils are applying numeracy skills to solve problems in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- To what extent pupils are involved in assessing their own progress and how well they know what they need to do to improve.

Information about the school

Halton Lodge is a smaller-than-average primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in a Reception class. The school has gained a number of awards, including Artsmark Gold, Basic Skills and Healthy School status. The headteacher was appointed in January 2011.

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

Halton Lodge is a good school. There are some outstanding elements to its work. Outstanding care, guidance and support contribute well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils feel extremely safe at school, they show an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and make very valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community.

After the previous inspection, pupils' attainment and progress declined. Well-focused leadership, together with strong teamwork among the staff, have brought about significant improvements. All groups of pupils are achieving well because of good teaching and effective assessment procedures. Outstanding partnerships with other agencies and organisations contribute to pupils' learning and well-being. Parents and carers are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Typical comments were: 'My child enjoys every day at this school'; 'I am pleased with my child's progress'; 'We are pleased with the choice of school we made'; and 'brilliant school'.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They make good progress in all areas of learning, often from low starting points. Good progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2. The school has successfully implemented a range of strategies to improve pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is average. In Key Stage 1, pupils' performance in writing lags behind that of reading and mathematics. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to write extended pieces, particularly in different subject areas. Across the school, pupils' handwriting and presentation are inconsistent.

Teaching promotes good progress for pupils successfully. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning are effective. Assessment is usually used well to plan teaching and to match tasks to pupils' abilities. At times, tasks are not challenging enough for the more-able. Pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve because teachers set specific individual learning targets for reading, writing and mathematics. Occasionally, learning can decline to satisfactory rather than good levels when lessons lack pace and pupils are not sufficiently active in their learning. A good curriculum is enriched by a wide range of additional activities. There are good displays across the school, especially in art, and design and technology.

Community cohesion is promoted well and pupils make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are courteous, friendly and considerate of others. They are keen and enthusiastic learners, who relate well to adults and to their peers. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. The school works hard to promote good attendance, which is above average.

The relatively new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and respect of parents and carers, pupils and staff. Through systematic evaluation, the school knows what it does well and identifies key areas for improvement. Good planning and positive action have raised pupils' achievement. The school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by the end of Year 2 to at least the levels of reading and mathematics by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces in a range of subjects
 - strengthening the teaching of handwriting, so that all pupils develop a fluent, joined style.
- Remove minor inconsistencies in teaching by ensuring that, in all classes:
 - lessons proceed at a brisk pace and pupils are actively involved in their learning
 - tasks are sufficiently challenging, particularly for the most able.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills levels below those expected for their age. Language and social skills are often low. Across the school, pupils enjoy the wide range of activities and events provided. They are enthusiastic learners, who are keen to do well. Pupils told the inspectors, 'We don't just learn, we have fun too' and 'Games help us with our learning'. All groups of pupils make good progress, including the more-able and those with special educational needs and /or disabilities. School assessments, pupils' work and the lessons seen indicate that attainment by the end of Year 6 is average. Attainment is steadily improving and, in 2011, an above-average proportion of Year 6 pupils attained the higher Level 5 in English.

Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening because of the regular opportunities provided for them to discuss their learning in pairs and to share their work with the class. Pupils make good progress in reading and enjoy books because of the well-focused approach to the teaching of reading. Improving pupils' writing skills has been an improvement priority. Pupils write for different purposes and in a range of styles. They write imaginatively and usually spelling and punctuation are accurate. Pupils in Year 6 planned and wrote an interesting brochure to persuade people to holiday on their island. They used alliteration, facts, opinions, exaggeration and rhetorical questions to persuade their readers. While there are some good

examples of pupils applying their writing skills in subjects other than English lessons, this approach is not consistent. Handwriting and presentation are not always well developed.

Pupils make good progress in mathematics because of the interesting and practical activities that are usually matched well to pupils’ needs. Pupils’ problem-solving skills are developed effectively by the challenging and short ‘morning maths’ sessions. Pupils in Year 3 used a computer program well to consolidate the telling of the time and to order jumbled clocks from earliest to latest times.

Pupils make good progress in their personal development. They work well collaboratively and are very supportive of fellow pupils. Good behaviour and positive relationships contribute to successful learning. Pupils choose healthy foods eagerly and participate enthusiastically in a range of physical activities; they are very keen to keep fit and healthy. They feel very well cared for at school and are confident that there are always adults they can turn to for help and support. They demonstrate a very strong understanding of how to look after themselves and one another. Pupils take on additional responsibilities willingly, such as serving on the school council, being road safety officers or eco-monitors. They support those less fortunate than themselves gladly by raising funds for different appeals and charities. Pupils are well prepared for their next school and for their future. Personal and social skills are well developed and they make good progress in acquiring and applying literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

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	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching promotes enjoyment and good learning for pupils successfully. Lessons are well planned and purposeful. Teachers’ explanations, demonstrations and instructions promote learning well. However, the demonstration of good writing and showing pupils how to create and improve sentences are underused teaching strategies. Questioning is used effectively to challenge pupils’ thinking and to check

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

their understanding. Pupils are challenged well in lessons because interesting tasks are tailored well to their abilities. In a few lessons, teachers’ introductions are too long and pupils are not actively involved in their learning. Pupils, particularly the older ones, have good opportunities to assess and review their own progress against their learning targets and success criteria set by teachers.

The curriculum promotes good academic progress for pupils and contributes very well to their personal development. Strategies for the teaching of writing and mathematics are effective in bringing about improvements. Pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills in different areas, especially in Key Stage 1. Provision for art is a strength, with good-quality displays of pupils’ work around the school. Clubs are popular and very well attended. They include dance, French, football, homework, performing arts and tennis. A successful residential trip to North Wales provides exciting outdoor activities and develops pupils’ team-building and problem-solving skills.

Care, guidance and support are at the heart of the school’s positive ethos. The school provides a well-organised, safe and secure environment for pupils to learn in. That is much appreciated by pupils, parents and carers. Very positive relationships have been established with parents and carers. One commented, ‘The school is very approachable’. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are assessed carefully. The effective programmes and support provided enable pupils to make good progress. In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting those pupils and their families that need additional help. Very effective monitoring and promotion of attendance have led to above-average outcomes.

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?

The headteacher and staff have created a very positive and warm atmosphere where all pupils can learn and develop. Senior leaders, staff and the governing body are focused firmly on providing good-quality provision and promoting positive outcomes for pupils. Teaching is monitored and developed effectively by senior staff. There is a clear determination to improve teaching further by eliminating the minor inconsistencies.

The governing body shows a good understanding of the school’s strengths and priorities for improvement. It is supportive and provides constructive challenge, in order to hold the school to account. A number of governors are involved actively in the life of the school. Good attention is given to safeguarding and there are effective policies and procedures to protect pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of the procedures are robust and thorough. All staff are well trained in the area of

safeguarding. Safe practices for pupils are promoted successfully through the school's teaching and ethos.

All pupils have full access to the wide range of provision and staff strive to ensure that pupils progress as well as they can. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and any discrimination is tackled effectively.

Exceptionally strong partnerships with a wide range of other agencies and organisations have been established. They have a very positive impact on the learning and well-being of pupils. The school is highly successful in helping parents and carers to support their children's learning. A parent wrote, 'There are good family learning courses and opportunities are offered by the school'. Many parents are full of praise for the school's work.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The curriculum promotes pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths successfully. Overseas partnerships to increase pupils' understanding of the global community are developing well.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and the use of external advice have led to clear improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Children settle quickly into the setting because of effective induction arrangements and the very positive relationships established with parents and carers. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the considerable attention adults give to their care and welfare.

Children are taught well and make good gains in their learning. They enjoy the wide range of indoor and outdoor activities thoroughly. Adults assess children's performance well and keep clear records of their individual development and progress. There is a good blend of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have good opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. Just occasionally, activities lack a clear purpose or lack sufficient resources. Good emphasis is placed on developing children's language skills because

these are often low when they start. Children make rapid progress in speaking and listening. They enjoy stories and make good gains in acquiring and practising early writing skills. Children use ICT well to consolidate and support their learning in areas such as the alphabet, the sounds that letters make and two-dimensional shapes. They enjoy exploring with colours and create attractive patterns and pictures. The outdoor learning areas encourage children to be active and purposeful learners.

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

The inspection team received a higher-than-usual response to the questionnaire. All parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are very happy with their children’s experience at the school. They are especially pleased with the safety in the school, the sense of enjoyment, the quality of teaching and how well the school helps them to support their children’s learning. The inspection findings reflect the very positive views. The results of the survey indicate that parents and carers have no serious concerns about the school. However, the school is not complacent and the headteacher and staff strive continually to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Halton Lodge 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	96	79	25	21	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	102	84	19	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	98	81	23	19	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	94	78	27	22	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	101	83	20	17	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	96	79	25	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	89	74	32	26	0	0	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)	88	73	30	25	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	96	79	25	21	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	87	72	33	27	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	87	72	34	28	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	96	79	25	21	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	103	85	18	15	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	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.



18 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halton Lodge Primary School, Runcorn, WA7 5LU

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit. Halton Lodge Primary is a good school. There are some outstanding things. The main strengths are:

- You enjoy school and attendance is above average.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- A good range of learning activities is provided, including clubs and visits.
- You get on well with others and your behaviour is good.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel extremely safe at school because teachers and other adults take care of you and provide good guidance and support.
- You make very valuable contributions to the school and to the wider community.
- The school has established very strong links with your families and partnerships with other agencies to help your learning and development.
- The school is led and managed well.

We have given your school a few points for improvement:

- Some of you could make more progress in writing, especially in Key Stage 1. We have asked teachers to provide more opportunities for you to write extended pieces in other subjects. We have also asked teachers to help you to develop clear and joined handwriting.
- In a few classes, the lesson and your learning need to move along more quickly. We have asked teachers to ensure that tasks are always challenging, especially for those who find learning easy.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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