

Hope Primary School - A Joint Catholic and Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135796
Local authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	385881
Inspection dates	19–20 April 2012
Lead inspector	Stephen Rowland

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	333
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Stott
Headteacher	Belinda Basnett (executive headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	No previous inspection report
School address	Lordens Road Huyton L14 8UD
Telephone number	
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Introduction

Inspection team

Stephen Rowland
John Shutt
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Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 16 lessons taught by 13 teachers. In addition, inspectors visited short phonics (the sounds that letters make) sessions and listened to children read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a local authority officer and members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school development plan, records of pupils' attainment and progress and minutes of the governing body. During the inspection the responses to 63 parental and carers' questionnaires were analysed, together with responses to others completed by staff and pupils.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school. It opened in April 2011. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and very few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well-above average. The percentage of those who receive external support including those with a statement of special educational needs is also high. The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school holds the International Schools Award, the Leading Aspect Award for Commitment to Family Learning and the Artsmark Gold Award. The executive headteacher, who was appointed in April 2011, also leads another local primary 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Since opening in April 2011 it has established itself as a successful school in which children are safe and secure. It is not outstanding because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching which prevents teaching from being outstanding overall. The school is highly regarded by a very large majority of parents and carers.
- Achievement is good. Children make outstanding progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good and attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good and often outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good. There are examples of outstanding practice. A large majority of lessons are lively and engaging and pupils are often, but not always, involved in vibrant, stimulating activities. Planning is thorough and caters well for individual needs. There are some inconsistencies relating to the pace of learning and the variety of tasks.
- Behaviour is typically good. Pupils are respectful and considerate and actively support the school's motto: 'Believe, Respect, Achieve'. They have a positive attitude to learning. There are very few instances of bullying and these are dealt with quickly and firmly.
- The executive headteacher is respected and trusted by staff, parents and carers and pupils alike. She has established a clear direction for the school. Staff and governors work closely together to realise the challenging targets which the school has set itself. The leadership of teaching is strong and performance is constantly improving. The curriculum provides a broad and stimulating range of activities and experiences to develop basic skills, self-esteem and a love of learning.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers' introductions to lessons are brief and concise
 - making sure that there are regular opportunities during lessons to check on pupils' understanding and to deal with any misconceptions
 - increasing the opportunities to engage pupils in active, investigative learning.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills which are generally well-below those expected for their age. They make outstanding progress as a result of a lively and stimulating learning environment and thoughtful, engaging teaching and achieve very good outcomes in all areas of learning. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and current tracking information shows that a large majority of pupils in both key stages are on track to meet or exceed the challenging targets set for them. Inspection evidence shows that the high standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 have been maintained and those in Key Stage 1 are rapidly improving. The school has focused on sharing effective practice so that teaching is consistently good or better. This has ensured that any gaps in performance have been eliminated. The school's use of performance data is clear and accessible so that teachers can plan lessons which enable all pupils to make good progress. There are no significant variations between the performance of different groups of pupils. The needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are identified and detailed programmes of support are put in place. This ensures that they make progress which is at least as good as their classmates. The very thorough programmes of support which are put in place for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable allow many of this group to make outstanding progress.

Pupils respond well to carefully planned and engaging tasks where they work together to gather information and solve problems. For example, in a highly effective literacy lesson pupils were working together to collect evidence after staff had deliberately left the classroom and corridor in an untidy state. Clues were collected and theories put forward about a possible offender. Once these had been collated pupils had to compose emails to an imaginary police officer to describe the crimes and to suggest ways of dealing with the suspected culprit. Pupils learnt to work effectively in teams and to organise their evidence into a concise and clear format. There are regular and systematic phonics and guided-reading sessions, and progress in reading and spelling is good. The school has detailed records of progress and attainment and these show that attainment in reading is now above average at the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave in Year 6. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the progress their children make in school, and almost all agree that they develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.

Quality of teaching

All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their children are taught well in school. The school's drive to disseminate good practice has had a positive impact on attainment and progress. Lessons are thoughtfully planned so that the needs of all are met. The best lessons are lively and there is a brisk pace to learning. Pupils are encouraged to work actively and collaboratively to explore ideas and to extend their thinking. In a particularly engaging numeracy lesson, for example, pupils worked as teams in the school hall to collate information about performance in a variety of exercises. The teacher introduced the lesson clearly and concisely and then pupils organised themselves to collect information and to find the best way to record it. In this, they were well supported by the teacher and teaching assistant. Learning was enjoyable and, as a consequence, progress was rapid. The teaching of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very effective. In all lessons teaching and learning support assistants effectively support groups of pupils and particular individuals.

At times, teachers spend too long introducing the topic for lessons and the pace of learning can slow. This means that engagement and progress are not as strong as they could be in these lessons. Occasionally, teachers do not create sufficient opportunities to pause and check on pupils' understanding and to deal with any possible misconceptions. The school has focused on developing a range of activities which are engaging and which allow pupils to develop investigative skills. This is still being consolidated and there remain some inconsistencies in teaching in the extent to which pupils work together to consider alternative ways to find information and to work out the best ways to solve problems. Marking and verbal feedback are supportive and helpful and always provide pupils with the means to improve their work.

The curriculum is planned carefully to ensure that pupils make progress in all subjects. Teaching contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. From the time that they start in school children learn to play and work together and to respect others. Pupils learn about other religions and cultures both in the United Kingdom and around the world and develop an understanding of diversity.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Inspectors observed good behaviour both in classrooms and around the school. Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the standard of behaviour in the school is good and that lessons are rarely disrupted by bad behaviour. Behaviour is managed consistently well and pupils respond to the high expectations the school has of them. They express great pride in the school and show respect and consideration to others. Records show that behaviour is characteristically good with very few exclusions recorded over the last year. Pupils agree that behaviour is good and say that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively.

Attendance has improved rapidly over the last 12 months and is now above average for primary schools. This shows that parents and carers support and value the school and that pupils enjoy coming to school.

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire said that the school deals quickly and firmly with bullying. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. They have a clear understanding of the different forms that bullying can take such as racist abuse and comments based on homophobic attitudes and know how to deal with unsafe situations. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that their child is safe in school. A number expressed their appreciation of the school's safe and supportive ethos. One such comment was, 'After going through a hard time at home my child has done very well. This is down to the school being very supportive.'

Leadership and management

The executive headteacher provides strong and focused leadership for this new school. Staff work closely together and share a sense of determination and confidence in what can be achieved. A group of committed senior leaders assists the executive headteacher in identifying the key issues which face the school and in tackling them in a thorough manner. Carefully considered professional development and performance management have enabled staff to develop their skills and knowledge. An experienced governing body is able to provide support for the school and does not shrink from asking challenging questions when required. Pupils' progress and well-being are tracked closely and action is taken swiftly to address any concerns. The support provided for those pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable is particularly effective. Teaching is monitored carefully through a programme of lesson observations and work scrutiny. The school's self-evaluation is open and thorough and it plans in a comprehensive way to secure improvement. There is good evidence to show the positive impact of the school's strategies over the last year on improving teaching and raising attainment and this shows a strong capacity for sustained improvement.

The school works very closely with parents and carers and all agreed that any concerns were dealt with quickly and effectively. Many parents and carers greatly value the close contact they have with the school's Parent Mentor and Learning Mentor and feel that this helps their children to settle and to succeed in school. Discrimination has no place in Hope and the promotion of equality is good. Any gaps in performance are quickly identified and dealt with. Safeguarding arrangements, which ensure the safety and security of pupils, are comprehensive.

The curriculum offers an impressive variety of enrichment and extra-curricular activities as well as a solid grounding in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils benefit from theme days, theatre visits and residential experiences. Many gain confidence and self-esteem through taking part in the children's university held at Hope University in Liverpool. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. There are active links with a number of local community groups and this helps pupils to understand their responsibilities to others.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



23 April 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hope Primary School - A Joint Catholic and Church of England Primary School, Huyton – L14 8UD

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit to Hope. We were particularly grateful to those of you who agreed to meet us during your lunch hour. We were also grateful to those of you who completed the questionnaire. Your comments were very helpful.

Hope is a good school. It has a number of strengths.

- You make good progress in English and mathematics and standards are rising in these subjects.
- Your behaviour is good. Attendance is improving rapidly.
- You are safe in school. The staff make sure that each individual is looked after properly.
- You have many enjoyable and stimulating lessons and activities.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are determined to make the school even better.

To help them make the school even better we have asked the teachers to:

- make sure that they do not spend too much time introducing lessons
- make sure that there are frequent opportunities in lessons to pause and check that everyone knows what to do and to deal with any misunderstandings
- make sure that there are frequent opportunities for you to work together in lessons to investigate problems and to find solutions.

You are very proud of your school. Please help by always doing your very best to support the school motto: 'Believe, Respect, Achieve'.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Rowland
Lead inspector

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