

Propps Hall Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Propps Hall Drive, Failsworth, Manchester, M35 0ND

Inspection dates 12–13 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils have a high regard for their school, describe it as 'one big happy family' and say they enjoy everything they do. Attendance is above average and parents say their children are well looked after and kept safe.
- Achievement is good. Pupils progress well, particularly in reading, and reach the expected standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Good teaching provides well planned lessons and activities. These capture pupils' interest and enthusiasm and so they are keen to learn and work hard. Reading is taught well and pupils are able to use their skills in all subjects.
- Excellent behaviour was observed in all situations. Pupils feel very safe and secure and become increasingly sensible and mature in the school's calm, harmonious atmosphere.
- Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and enjoy investigating the imaginative activities indoors and working outside in the fresh air.
- Led by the inspirational headteacher, staff and governors fully support her ambition to make the school even more successful. The quality of teaching is rigorously checked and this is having a positive impact on improving achievement and teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching and a small proportion requires improvement.
- Pupils make good but not outstanding progress, and not enough pupils reach the higher levels in writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with half a days' notice
- Inspectors observed 12 lessons; visited small groups at work, heard some pupils read and observed pupils at play and lunchtime.
- The team met with staff, pupils, parents, members of the governing body, and held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- They looked at school documents, school and national pupil progress data and the procedures for gathering an accurate picture of the school's performance and assessing the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils' workbooks and progress records were scrutinised and safeguarding arrangements were checked.
- The few responses in the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the views of parents and pupils in the school's own survey were taken into account.

Inspection team

Kathleen McArthur, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than most primary schools.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (those who are entitled to receive free school meals) is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below that found in most schools, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school offers before and after-school care.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant staffing changes at senior leadership level. The previous deputy headteacher was promoted to the headship two years ago and a new deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed. Two senior leaders were absent from school at the time of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching so all is good or better in order to further raise attainment, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
 - making sure teachers question pupils carefully throughout the lessons to check on their understanding and progress
 - using assessment information even more effectively to plan tasks for writing and mathematics that make more-able pupils think even harder
 - giving pupils clearer and more consistent guidance about the next steps to improve their work and making sure they have time to do so
 - reviewing the way teaching assistants are deployed so their skills are used more effectively during lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- When children enter the Nursery, their skills are well below those expected for their age, particularly their language, personal and social skills. The welcoming setting, high levels of care, good teaching and a stimulating curriculum makes sure they are quickly ready to learn. Although they progress well and enter Year 1 better prepared each year, they do not reach the expected levels.
- Inspectors agree with parents that their children make good progress as they move through the school.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are just below those found nationally. At the end of pupils' time in school, standards match the nationally expected level. In 2012, Year 6 pupils were particularly successful and every pupil reached the expected level in English and mathematics, and over half reached the higher level in reading.
- In both key stages, too few pupils reach the higher level in writing or mathematics. Careless spelling or punctuation often lessens the quality of pupils' writing. In lessons, writing out lengthy learning intentions sometimes leaves pupils little time to use and extend the skills they have learnt in the lesson.
- Attainment has risen gradually over time. School data indicate that pupils currently in Years 2 and 6 are on course to continue this upward trend and reach challenging targets and an increased proportion are expected to reach the higher level.
- In reading, attainment is above average. Younger pupils did well in the recent national screening test. The teaching of reading is well organised, with enjoyable daily letters and sounds activities. For example, Nursery children had fun tapping out the rhythm of their name. Consistently applied methods ensure pupils quickly gain the reading skills they need to support learning in all subjects and equip them well for the future.
- Pupils spoken to during the inspection were enthusiastic readers. One said, 'I want to keep reading to see what happens next', others named fantasy or history books and stories they have enjoyed. Younger pupils who find reading difficult at first know how to tackle unknown words by 'sounding them out', and many said their families listen to them read at home.
- Those entitled to the pupil premium make good and often better progress than their classmates because the school provides extra activities that meet their needs, such as visits out of school and skilled additional support. This means that the attainment gap with other groups is being successfully narrowed.
- Pupils with special educational needs progress at the same rate as their classmates, due to well led and organised provision that is closely directed to their abilities.

The quality of teaching is good

- One pupil said, 'Lessons are brilliant!' Good relationships with staff and good behaviour and attitudes to learning were seen in all lessons. Inspection evidence and the school's own monitoring records show that teaching is mostly good, with some that is outstanding and a small proportion that requires improvement.
- Lessons begin with stimulating mental activities that get pupils thinking. When teaching is good or better, pupils achieve well and make rapid gains in their learning and skills. The best lessons move along at a lively pace, help pupils develop the skills needed to work either in teams or independently, and teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate pupils to do even better and work harder.
- Teaching of outstanding quality was seen in a lesson for the oldest pupils, where they were challenged to use complex sentences to improve their written reports. Pupils rose to this challenge, worked extremely hard, supported each other with ideas and comments and finally

checked their own work against success criteria. Consequently, they made excellent progress.

- Where teaching requires improvement, support, although skilled, is not always provided where it can be most effective. Staff do not carefully question their pupils to check how well they are doing during the course of the lesson, so misunderstandings are not picked up swiftly enough and pupils progress more slowly.
- Good systems track and monitor pupils' progress closely and show if and where they may be falling behind. These systems give staff good information to match tasks to pupils' different abilities but sometimes, tasks do not fully stretch or challenge more-able pupils to reach the higher levels.
- Pupils know their learning targets in English and mathematics. They say their work is marked but their workbooks show variations in the quality of feedback and guidance. Some indicate the 'next steps' to improve work but some is unclear and the school marking code is not used consistently across the school. In addition, pupils are not always given opportunities to show they have used the teacher's guidance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Excellent behaviour means the school is a happy place for pupils and staff. Pupils cooperate willingly with each other in lessons, in groups or when working with different staff. They make an exceptional contribution to their own learning.
- Pupils and staff show respect, care and consideration for each other and pupils are always friendly, polite and keen to help. They move round inside and outside with consideration for their own and others' safety and say, 'We are all friends here, we don't fall out'.
- Agreed policies for promoting good behaviour are applied consistently. Pupils know and understand the need for school rules and think they are fair. The school is rightly proud that there have been no exclusions.
- Pupils feel very safe in school and know how to keep themselves safe, for example in relation to e-safety. They know they can turn to any member of staff if they have a problem and particularly value the Ocean room where they can go and talk to someone at any time.
- School councillors and the eco and safety officers are proud of their contributions to school life. For example, safety officers check that rooms are well-ventilated. The school council presents an assembly on bullying and pupils say the anti-bullying week each year is helpful.
- Pupils agree that bullying is not a problem and are confident that any rare incidents of bullying or misbehaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They understand that bullying may take different forms, such as name-calling or cyber-bullying, and know how to deal with them.
- The before and after-school care club assists working parents by providing a secure environment and enjoyable activities for those pupils who attend.
- Attendance is above average and the vast majority of pupils arrive on time each day. Robust efforts have successfully raised attendance levels and reduced cases of persistent absence.

The leadership and management are good

- School leaders are determined to continue to drive the school forward, to strive for excellence and make the school even better. Plans to do this clearly demonstrate they have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and what needs further improvement.
- Regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching are supported by professional training and staff accountability for pupils' progress. These are closely linked to staff performance management and pay rises. This has led to an increase in the proportion of good teaching which is making a positive impact on progress and attainment.
- Leaders place high priority on equality of opportunity, to provide for and meet the needs of all pupils so they experience and benefit from everything the school offers. For example, those

entitled to pupil premium funds are benefiting from the extra support and doing well.

- The rich curriculum is carefully planned to meet pupils' different needs. It provides them with the skills they need for further learning and builds on their interests so they want to learn more, seen in the rising trend in attainment. Literacy and mathematical skills are used and developed in other subjects. For example, creating charts in science or explaining the importance of rivers in geography.
 - The curriculum is particularly effective in promoting and extending pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, sports coaching, learning a foreign language or musical instrument. Varied visits out of school enrich classroom learning, such as to the Opera House in Manchester and older pupils particularly enjoyed their residential visit to France.
 - Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. The school site is safe, secure and well maintained, and staff have all undertaken child-protection and first-aid training.
 - The local authority provides light touch support for this good school.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - is well informed because governors visit school regularly, observing teaching and looking at pupils' books. Governors are not afraid to challenge and hold the school to account for standards and progress and the quality of teaching. They have a good grasp of the strengths of the school and what is needed to ensure further improvement, and ensure that pupil premium funding is spent well.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105663
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	402984

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	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carmel Taylor
Headteacher	Gillian Kay
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2008
Telephone number	0161 770 8400
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	info@proppshall.oldham.sch.uk

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