

Higher Lane Primary School

Egerton Road, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7EX

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- The quality of teaching, although improving, is not consistently good across all classes and subjects. As a result, pupils make average, rather than good, progress.
- Checks made on pupils' skills and knowledge are not always used in planning activities to meet the needs of different ability groups. As a result, work is not always hard enough, particularly for more-able pupils.
- The pace of learning in lessons is not always quick enough and sometimes the teacher spends too long talking leaving pupils too little time to work independently.
- The school does not make enough use of links between different subjects to improve pupils' writing skills.
- Leaders' plans for improvement focus on the correct issues but the intended outcomes of actions to improve the school are not precise enough.
- Subject and key stage leaders do not always make full use of the data available on pupils' attainment and progress to raise standards quickly in the area for which they are responsible.
- Leaders have brought about an improvement in standards of attainment, but attainment varies between subjects and is not as high in writing as in reading and mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior leaders have correctly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- As a result of effective training, the governing body is now holding the school to account well.
- Training for teachers has been effective in improving pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- The decline in standards has been reversed and standards of attainment are rising, particularly in reading.
- Pupils feel safe and their behaviour is good in lessons and around school. They are enthusiastic learners and enjoy school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons and part-lessons taught by 15 different teachers and briefly visited six small group teaching sessions led by six teachers or teaching assistants. Of the lesson observations, two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the lead inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback to a teacher on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their lesson.
- Inspectors met with two groups of Key Stage 2 pupils and listened to a group of Key Stage 1 pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors took account of the 29 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and talked informally to some parents at the beginning of the school day.
- The school's work was observed and the inspection team looked at a number of documents, including safeguarding records, the school's long- and medium-term improvement plan, the school's data for tracking pupils' progress, reports on the quality of teaching, teachers' planning and work in pupils' books.

Inspection team

Andrée Coleman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Faheem Chishti	Additional Inspector
Anthony Buckley	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- About a quarter of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and just over a tenth of all pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A below average proportion is eligible for the pupil premium which, in this school, provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action, and also at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are both below average.
- The school uses alternative provision at 'The Ark' to support pupils who have difficulties with managing their behaviour.
- In 2012, the school met the government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a new headteacher who joined the school in September 2011.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise standards in mathematics and English and in writing, in particular, by ensuring that:
 - the quality of teaching is consistently good across all classes
 - the pace of learning in lessons is brisk and teachers do not spend too long talking
 - opportunities are created for pupils to discuss their learning and there is sufficient time for them to work either independently or in small groups
 - teachers take account of information on pupils' skills and knowledge to plan work which helps them to learn, especially for the more-able pupils
 - all pupils respond to teachers' marking and have time to edit their work
 - good links are made between different subjects so that pupils can develop their writing skills in particular, through a variety of different subjects and through educational visits.
- Improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management by:
 - clearly identifying the intended outcomes of any actions to improve the school and using these to judge whether the school has been successful
 - developing subject and key stage leaders' understanding and use of data on pupils' attainment and progress so that they are more effective in raising standards
 - creating more opportunities for teachers to work together and observe teaching to share good practice.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- From broadly average starting points when they start school, pupils reach average standards in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing are below average, but improving. Pupils are making more progress in writing than previously, but progress in this subject remains slower than progress in reading and mathematics. Progress in reading is increasing rapidly.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children make expected progress overall and reach broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Children achieve higher standards in mathematics, particularly in their calculation skills, than in writing. Standards in reading are broadly average.
- In Key Stage 1, there was a decline in standards in reading, writing and mathematics following the previous inspection. However, this decline has been reversed and standards have risen with most pupils working at above average levels. Standards in reading are considerably above average. Actions to improve pupils' writing skills have been particularly effective and progress has increased for most pupils.
- Daily lessons to teach pupils about the sounds that letters make (phonics) are undertaken with all pupils in small groups to help them learn. Effective tracking systems are in place to measure the progress they make. As a result of progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1, more pupils last year reached the required standard in the national phonics test than did so in most schools.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and pupils in receipt of the pupil premium make similar progress to other groups of pupils. This is because they are suitably supported in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants.
- In 2012, pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding made the same progress as pupils not in receipt of the funding in English and mathematics. Overall, their attainment in English was lower than for similar pupils nationally and average in mathematics. As a result, senior leaders have used the pupil premium grant differently this year and new small group teaching programmes are in place to support pupils eligible for the pupil premium grant. These teaching programmes began at the start of this term, so the full impact is not yet evident, but early indications are that pupils are making good progress.
- More-able pupils do not always progress quickly enough, especially in writing. This is because teachers do not always set work that is difficult enough to help them learn at a higher level. Teachers do not always make the best use of information that they have on pupils' skills and knowledge and do not always modify the lesson if pupils find the work relatively easy.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good in all classes and in all subjects. It is good in some lessons, but requires improvement in about a third of lessons. No teaching observed during the inspection was inadequate.
- Recent training for teachers to help pupils become better writers has been particularly effective in Key Stage 1. Pupils have good opportunities to talk about what they are going to write and resources such as lists of particular types of words are available for pupils to use to improve the quality of their writing. For example, some pupils were observed choosing different connecting words, such as 'because' or 'though' to complete sentences they were writing.
- Where the pace of learning is brisk, pupils learn more rapidly. For example, Year 6 pupils were observed quickly getting on with their mathematics tasks after a brief input by the teacher to check that the pupils had the skills to solve a range of problems. In other lessons, teachers sometimes talk for too long and give pupils too much information so that the work is made too

easy for them and opportunities to work out answers for themselves are limited.

- Reading and writing skills are mostly taught well in literacy lessons, but opportunities to develop these skills in other subjects are not always taken. Although the curriculum helps to develop pupils' skills and prepares them to live in a diverse society, not enough opportunities are provided for pupils to learn beyond the classroom through educational visits.
- Mathematical skills are mostly taught well within mathematics lessons and there are effective weekly sessions for pupils taught in small groups to develop their calculation skills. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their mathematical skills through other subjects and topic work.
- In some lessons, pupils are given good opportunities to work things out for themselves. For example, in a lesson observed in Key Stage 1, pupils worked independently looking at information and videos about the Chinese New Year. They used the information they found in their writing about this celebration. In other lessons, teachers do not always create enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language have effective support from teachers and teaching assistants in lessons. Adults question pupils appropriately to check on and extend their understanding. This ensures that these pupils make progress at a similar rate to their peers.
- Teachers' marking is very effective in informing pupils about what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve. Good reference is made to the targets which have been set for individual pupils in English and mathematics. In some classes, pupils make very good responses to the marking and have the opportunity to edit and improve their work. However, this is not the case for all pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around school. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the activities provided for them on the playground and get on well with each other. Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in the lessons where the quality of teaching requires improvement, pupils sometimes lose interest and do not pay close enough attention to the teacher and to each other.
- In the best lessons, pupils have good opportunities to work in pairs and small groups on tasks which they find interesting. In these lessons, they show great enthusiasm and very good attitudes to learning. Pupils say that working cooperatively with others helps them to learn.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and that there is very little bullying of any kind. They say that the behaviour reward system works very well and encourages them to behave. Pupils have great confidence in adults and say that if there are any problems, adults will resolve them quickly.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe including when using the internet. They can remember the 'smart' rules taught in school about how to use the internet safely.
- Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is shown by their attendance rates which are slightly higher than for most primary schools.
- Parents speak positively of the school and all parents responding to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire, Parent View, said that their child was happy, felt safe and was well looked after at this school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body have correctly identified the school's strengths and weaknesses and have taken action to bring about improvement. There has been some success and the decline in attainment has been reversed and standards are rising, most notably in Key Stage 1 and in reading across the school. However, the intended outcomes of actions to improve are not always identified clearly enough for leaders to evaluate fully how

successful the actions have been.

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent but improving as the result of regular checks made by senior leaders on the quality of teaching. Feedback is given to teachers and appropriate training is arranged to continue to develop their teaching skills. This is effective and the impact of improved teaching is evident in improving pupils' attainment. However, there are still not enough opportunities for teachers to observe each other teaching and learn from each other and from opportunities to visit successful schools.
- Subject and key stage leaders do not yet make the best use of data available on pupils' attainment and progress to further raise standards in the area for which they are responsible.
- The school works hard to promote equal opportunities and tackles discrimination and most groups of pupils make progress at similar rates. However, targets for more-able pupils are not high enough and not enough of these pupils reach above average standards particularly in writing. Pupils in receipt of the pupil premium grant make similar progress to other groups in school, but this is not yet enough to narrow the gap between the standards they reach and the higher standards, as measured by average points scores, reached by pupils not in receipt of the grant.
- Good use is made of alternative provision to help pupils who need support with managing their behaviour. Teachers report an improvement in pupils' behaviour in school as a result.
- Targets are set for teachers and senior leaders check on their performance regularly. This has contributed to the improvement in the quality of teaching, the raising of standards and ensured that there is no teaching that is inadequate.
- The local authority provides effective and regular support to the school and governing body.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - After a period when the school's results declined and the governing body did not hold the school to account well enough, governance has improved. This is due to training provided by the headteacher since his appointment along with much better information about the school's performance. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and knows what actions have been taken to improve. They have evaluated the impact of these actions and know where strategies for improvement have been successful, such as reversing the decline in standards. Governors have a clear view of the quality of teaching and what has been done to ensure that teachers perform well. With the headteacher, the governing body has been involved in successfully tackling underperformance and in rewarding teachers who ensure that pupils make rapid progress. Statutory duties are carried out and procedures to safeguard pupils are fully in place. Governors are working closely with the headteacher and have become more effective in using data during the school year to check on how well the school is doing. This is why an external review of governance has not been recommended.

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	105302
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	404980

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	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jenny Brewin
Headteacher	Ross McMurdo
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2011
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