

# Higher Lane Primary School

Egerton Road, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7EX

**Inspection dates** 19–20 November 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils' achievement is good because current pupils are now making good progress from their different starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics vary over time but are showing an improvement across the school because teaching is now good.
- Well-planned provision means that children in the early years settle quickly into school life and make good progress in the Reception unit.
- Teachers and well-trained teaching assistants provide well-targeted support to ensure that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils, minority ethnic pupils and those pupils in the early stages of learning English now make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, both in and out of lessons. They are very proud of their school and show excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils say they feel extremely safe in school; the older pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and support younger pupils in a mature manner.
- The school has improved rapidly since the appointment of the new headteacher because she has inspired the senior leadership team. Together they have improved pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and behaviour and safety.
- The curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Teachers accurately assess how well pupils are doing and their effective marking in English and mathematics enhances pupils' learning.
- The governors provide effective support and challenge, ask pertinent questions and work closely with the senior leadership team. Governors have supported the headteacher in raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and given hard enough work to enable them to reach the highest standards and to make the best possible progress.
- Attainment in writing is not as high as that in reading and mathematics.
- The gap in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils within school and all pupils nationally is beginning to close, but it needs to close further.
- The new strategies that have recently been put in place to improve the quality of teaching are yet to be fully embedded or reflected fully in pupils' achievement over time.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 26 lessons. They observed pupils, including those receiving additional support to boost their achievement, working in special groups known as ‘accelerated learning groups’. Four of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers. An assembly was also observed.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, two representatives of the local authority, senior and middle leaders and newly qualified teachers.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at documentation including: teachers’ planning, the school’s analysis of its strengths and weaknesses, information on pupils’ attainment and progress, records of behaviour and safety, monitoring of teaching and performance management, minutes of the governing body meetings and safeguarding documents.
- A discussion was held with two groups of pupils and informal conversations took place during lessons and at break times. Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about the books they enjoy.
- Inspectors took account of the 35 responses to Ofsted’s online questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They also spoke with parents at the start of the school day. The inspectors also looked at questionnaires completed by 27 members of staff.

## Inspection team

Julie Harrison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alison Burbage	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, or who are looked after by the local authority, is below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has had two part-time acting headteachers followed by the present headteacher's appointment in January 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The before- and after-school club is managed by the governing body.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching to outstanding in order to raise pupils' achievement in reading, mathematics and especially in writing by:
  - ensuring that there is sufficient challenge throughout lessons for the most able pupils
  - sharing the good and outstanding practice that is already evident in the school to further improve teachers' skills
  - evaluate and extend the successful strategies used to boost progress for some groups of pupils to further improve the learning and progress of the disadvantaged pupils.
- Embed the leadership and management strategies that are improving the pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching across the whole school.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has implemented many new strategies which have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement, so that they are now both good. Robust monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to ensure that the school's self-evaluation is accurate and the school development plan provides an effective tool for school improvement. The two assistant headteachers have rapidly improved their leadership and management skills. The headteacher, staff and governors have high expectations and are working enthusiastically together, as they aim for further improvement.
- Pupils' behaviour has improved and is now outstanding. Leaders have ensured high quality safety procedures are in place and have successfully improved pupils' attendance.
- The senior management team collects and uses a good range of information to check and track the progress made by individuals and groups. Pupils who are falling behind become part of an identified learning group, known as an accelerated learning group, where high quality targeted support is provided. Importantly, these sessions aimed at accelerating achievement, run over a six-week period, have just begun to support the most able pupils who previously did not always do as well as they could.
- Leadership and management of the early years provision are good. They ensure that children settle in quickly to the school's routines so that they make a positive start to their school life.
- The management of the performance of teachers ensures that staff are held to account for the quality of their teaching and for pupils' progress; this accountability is appropriately linked to pay awards. New approaches to teaching that have been put in place have improved the quality of teaching but are yet to be fully embedded or to be reflected fully in pupils' achievement over time, such as in national tests. Good and outstanding practice that is already evident is not yet widely shared to improve teaching even further.
- Staff morale is very high because they feel valued and inspired in their roles. Subject leaders are accountable for the progress pupils make in their subjects and take part in decision making to improve standards in those subjects. They feedback to governors about the strengths and development areas in the teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects. Support staff are used effectively to ensure that individual pupils make good progress through sharply targeted support. They are well trained and work collaboratively with teaching staff.
- The local authority has worked in the school on a regular basis offering valuable support and guidance; the advisors know the school well. They acknowledge how much the school has improved under the new headteacher.
- The curriculum is well planned and takes account of the interests of the pupils through 'learning walls'. Tolerance and respect, a feature throughout the school, prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Extra-curricular provision is good, including in the before- and after-school club.
- Parents who spoke with inspectors were positive about all aspects of the school's work, especially since the arrival of the headteacher. 'There has been a complete transformation' was a typical comment.
- Effective use is made of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. A part-time additional teacher and a Parent Support Worker have been employed to provide additional support. Disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make similar or better progress than other pupils within the school. As a result, gaps in attainment between the two groups are starting to narrow. However, this improvement has not yet been sustained over time to close the attainment gaps fully.
- The primary school sport funding is used to buy in a specialist sports coach to improve the teaching of physical education and increase pupils' participation in sporting activities and clubs, as well as to improve pupils' health and well-being. The school now has a football team and a netball team which play in school leagues.
- The special educational needs coordinator, who is also responsible for minority ethnic pupils and pupils who are in the early stages of learning English, ensures they make good progress from their various starting points. Effective analysis of the needs of these pupils ensures that targeted support is provided. This promotes equality of opportunity for these pupils.
- Safeguarding arrangements are of the highest standard and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors support and challenge the school's leadership team. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and ask pertinent questions. Governors have focused on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They work effectively with the senior leadership team and middle leaders, especially to review the school's performance data. Governors acknowledge how much the school has improved under the guidance of the new headteacher. They understand how the new

accelerated learning groups have raised the profile of teaching assistants and improved pupils' progress. Members of the governing body have a range of experience and expertise. When a new member is appointed, governors take account of the skills the governing body requires to make its work even more effective. Governors visit the school regularly and make sure staff encourage tolerance and respect as they prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. They understand the school's performance management system and ensure that teachers' pay awards are linked to pupils' progress. Finances are scrutinised well; governors ensure that the pupil premium funding improves the progress and learning of disadvantaged pupils and that the primary school sport funding enhances the sporting opportunities of all the pupils.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are outstanding

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are very polite, friendly and considerate of each other and of adults. They show great respect for their teachers and other adults in the school, including supply teachers. This has recently helped them to make better progress, especially in the accelerated learning groups which build up pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Displays around the school support the key values of respect and responsibility.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They take great pride in their work; they are always pleased to discuss their ideas and answer questions confidently. In lessons, they listen carefully, concentrate well and start given tasks quickly. Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils regularly respond to teachers' marking to improve their learning further.
- The pupils' attitudes and excellent behaviour are evident around the school, in the corridors, dining hall and in the playground. The older pupils support the younger pupils willingly and sensitively. The head and deputy head boy and girl take their responsibilities very seriously and are a credit to the school.
- Attendance has rapidly improved through the work of the Parent Support Worker. Robust procedures are in place that ensure regular high attendance. Attendance has risen from 94.9% in 2013 to 96% in 2014 and is currently 97.2%, which is above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy the extra-curricular clubs, which are of a high standard. The before- and after-school club integrates well with the school. The club's staff hold regular meetings with the school's special educational needs coordinator and the headteacher. There is smooth and effective communication between parents and school. The gardening club has built up the self-esteem and improved the attitudes to learning of some of the older pupils; it has enabled them to take on a role of responsibility as 'key gardeners'.
- Pupils say that bullying is very rare. They know that the headteacher does not tolerate bullying. They are confident that if any form of bullying occurred, it would be dealt with quickly. A group of pupils told inspectors that 'they could not think of anytime they had been bullied or afraid' at school.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Safeguarding procedures are highly effective and fully meet current requirements. Child protection procedures are thorough and sensitive. The school enables initial assessments to be made quickly and follows up required actions, resulting in a high level of support for families and improved outcomes for pupils.
- Records show that there are few concerns about behaviour and safety for any groups of pupils and if these occur, strategies are in place to deal with them effectively.
- The wide range of static and small play equipment in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is used to best effect at break times in conjunction with a high level of adult supervision. There are clear guidelines about the safe use of equipment, especially the large static equipment.
- Pupils say they feel very safe and secure in school because adults look after them very well. They have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe, including when using the internet.
- Parents, governors and staff agree that pupils feel safe in school and they are extremely positive about the changes that have occurred since the arrival of the new headteacher.

## **The quality of teaching** is good

- The quality of teaching and the work in pupils' books have improved rapidly this term and are typically

good across the school with some that is outstanding, especially in Year 6.

- Expectations of pupils' work ethic and behaviour are extremely high. There are very good working relationships between pupils and all staff members and between individual pupils and groups. Everyone works collaboratively, supporting each other well.
- Teachers give clear explanations and ask pupils searching questions to see how much they have understood. They are helped to learn from their mistakes. Lessons motivate and interest pupils of different abilities. Sometimes, however, the most able pupils are not given work that is hard enough to sufficiently challenge them to make the best possible progress.
- Pupils' writing has not been as strong as it should be, but currently pupils are given interesting activities to encourage them to write regularly and at length. Year 5 pupils were fully engaged in comparing a modern-day classroom with that in a workhouse. Year 6 pupils analysed an extract from a famous school for wizards and their own school brochure to give them ideas about how to write an information leaflet. Both sets of pupils confidently started their written tasks and wrote competently and to a high standard. Additionally, an inspector observed a small group of Year 4 pupils make outstanding progress during an information and communication technology session, which consolidated and extended work from an English lesson on how to write instructions.
- Pupils enjoy reading and it is taught effectively. The younger pupils enjoy using their knowledge of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) to read and write words to build up simple sentences. Pupils read fiction and non-fiction books with understanding.
- Current pupils make good progress in mathematics. This is evidenced in lessons and in their books. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of different ability groups. Teachers build on previously learnt skills to improve pupils' learning and additional challenges are always available. Year 2 pupils enjoyed singing the number bond song and then used the information to form number bonds with larger numbers. Year 6 pupils confidently applied their division skills to work out high-level mathematical problems. Pupils' problem-solving skills across the school have been improved by the implementation of 'problem-solving Friday'.
- The targeted support in the daily group sessions aimed at accelerating the learning of underachieving pupils is improving pupils' learning further in reading, writing and mathematics. Well-trained teaching assistants are accountable for the learning of small groups of pupils and the pupils thoroughly enjoy these sessions. These groups are improving the learning of all pupils, especially the disadvantaged pupils, those with disabilities and special educational needs, minority ethnic pupils and those who are at an early stage of learning English. Even more recently, these accelerated learning groups have begun to support the most able pupils, to ensure that they make the best progress they can in order to reach the higher standards in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Marking in English and mathematics books is highly effective and shows pupils how to improve their work. In turn, pupils regularly edit their work in response to the teachers' comments to improve their learning. Frequently changing English and mathematics 'learning walls' in each classroom also support and improve pupils' learning.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Achievement is improving quickly this term in reading, writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 due to good and sometimes outstanding teaching. Achievement is now good.
- Many children start in the Reception unit with knowledge and skills typical for their age. Due to good teaching, they make good progress from their various starting points and are well prepared to start Key Stage 1 activities. For the last two years, a high proportion of children have achieved a good level of development, which is the expected standard.
- Pupils' knowledge of phonics has improved. The results of the Year 1 check on pupils' skills in 2013 were below the national average. However, in 2014, 77% reached the expected standard, which is just above the national average. Phonics teaching is well planned with effective support where required, so that the improvement is sustainable.
- Standards in Key Stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics vary over time, but are usually broadly in line with national averages. However, in 2014, standards in mathematics were significantly below average. Not enough pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. These weaknesses are now being rectified and currently pupils across Key Stage 1 are making good progress. The current Year 2 pupils' results are predicted to be above the national average and more pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels of attainment in the three subjects.
- Over time, standards at the end of Year 6 have varied. In 2014, standards in reading and mathematics



were broadly in line with national averages, but significantly below average in writing. However, the school's recent focus on improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching shows a rapidly improving picture of standards. The current Year 6 pupils are already working at a higher standard than last year's group so that the 2015 results are predicted to be above the 2014 results, especially in writing. Key Stage 2 pupils are now making good progress from their various starting points, especially Year 6 pupils.

- Reading is taught effectively and the current year groups are making good progress. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils read confidently with expression at a level appropriate to their age. They enthusiastically discuss their reading books. The school has recently opened the library at lunchtime to promote the enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils' writing books show that pupils are making good progress across many different writing skills since the beginning of the academic year. The current Year 6 pupils are working at a higher level than the previous year group because teaching in Year 6 is now very strong.
- Current pupils are making good progress in mathematics. Work is planned to meet pupils' different needs and additional challenges are always available. Accelerated learning groups are organised to support pupils who are underachieving.
- In the past, the most able pupils have not always reached the higher standards in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The accelerated learning groups have now been adapted to also support and challenge the most able pupils so that they can make the best progress possible.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils from minority ethnic groups and those at an early stage in their learning of English are well supported in accelerated learning groups so that they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. In reading, their attainment was two terms behind that of their classmates. In writing and mathematics, it was nearly three terms behind. In comparison with all pupils nationally, the difference was just over one term behind for reading and mathematics but over four terms behind in writing. Teachers have ensured that the gaps in attainment have begun to narrow this term through the accelerated learning groups. Disadvantaged pupils made similar progress in reading and mathematics to others nationally in 2014, but far less progress in writing. However, across the school disadvantaged pupils are beginning to make similar or better progress than their classmates and, as a result, gaps in attainment in all three subjects are closing.

### The early years provision

### is good

- Many children start in the early years with skills that are typical for their age. They settle in quickly from many different nurseries and make good progress from their different starting points. Careful monitoring of progress ensures that the children experience a curriculum which matches their particular needs and that they are prepared for Key Stage 1 by the end of the year.
- Teaching and learning are good. There is an appropriate balance between activities that are adult led and those that children can choose for themselves. Activities take into consideration the age, ability and interests of the children. Where activities are adult led, these are well focused through the use of appropriate questioning during discussions.
- Staff identify children's particular needs, such as ensuring that they feel happy so that they are willing to learn. This is evident in how quickly they settle into their daily routines. Children develop a positive attitude to their learning, as well as working and playing in harmony with one another. They are willing and eager to talk about their work and readily engage in conversation with adults. Children's behaviour is outstanding.
- A positive partnership with parents is developed through a range of initiatives, such as induction meetings, workshops and regular newsletters. Parent say they are happy with the provision in this key stage and that staff are very approachable. Parents are confident that any 'issues' will be dealt with effectively by staff.
- Leadership of the early years is good and there is a clear direction for continuing improvement. The early years team members work well together with a common sense of purpose to ensure that all children have the opportunity to learn and develop. This is evident in the support provided for children with specific needs; for instance, pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are given a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Observations and assessments are used to plan the 'next steps' in learning, which is evidenced in the children's individual learning profiles.
- There are highly effective safeguarding procedures in place.

- Some aspects of the early years provision are still developing, such as extending the range of challenging activities for the outside provision and the use of information and communication technology.



## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105302
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	442362

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	465
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Lester
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carol McLachlan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 February 2013
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 766 2005
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