

Horton Mill Community Primary School

Southlink, Glodwick, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL4 1GL

Inspection dates

28–29 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
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.

- Leaders, managers and all other staff have created a cohesive and purposeful learning community where all pupils feel valued as individuals.
- Pupils are extremely proud of their school. Their behaviour is exemplary inside and outside classrooms. They have extremely positive attitudes toward learning.
- The proportion of pupils who make expected and more-than-expected progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is close to the national average.
- Pupils in the early stages of learning English make good progress. They are given effective support in lessons and at other times.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress. They attain standards similar to their school peers, but below other pupils nationally.
- There are very positive and trusting relationships between pupils and staff. Teachers and learning support assistants make sure that pupils are kept safe and are committed to pupils' care and well-being.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development flourishes in this school. Pupils are very well-prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Governors know the school well and contribute to formulating the school's values and aims. They challenge the school about its performance.
- Provision in the early years is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching does not result in outstanding achievement for pupils. The work set does not always provide enough challenge, especially for the most able pupils. This limits the rate at which pupils make progress.
- Pupils are not always given enough guidance about how to improve their work and when advice is given, teachers do not always check that pupils have acted upon it.
- The school's approach to teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not consistent across the school and has resulted in slower progress for younger pupils.
- Leaders have not yet focused their efforts early enough on identifying the most able pupils to ensure they reach the standards of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. They also gathered other evidence related to the quality of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and two governors. A meeting was also held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils in all classes and held a formal meeting with members of the school council and pupil representatives of the anti-bullying, anti-racist and eco teams. They also met informally with other pupils in the playground.
- The inspectors took into account the responses to the school’s survey of parents’ views and held discussions with parents who brought their children to school. The number of responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) was too few to be meaningful.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed in the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors observed the school at work and scrutinised the work in pupils’ books, the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, improvement plans, planning and monitoring information and minutes of governing body meetings. Records relating to behaviour, attendance, safeguarding and child protection were also considered.

Inspection team

Anthony Kingston, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Fann

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Horton Mill is an average-sized primary school.
- All pupils in the school are from minority ethnic groups. The very large majority are of Pakistani heritage. All pupils on entry to the school are in the very early stages of learning to speak, read and write in English. This proportion is well-above the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well-above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium, is well-above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are in the care of the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end Year 6.
- The school holds several awards including the Eco-Green Flag, Healthy School (Gold), Achievement for All Quality Mark and is recognised as working towards becoming a UNICEF Rights Respecting School.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching and increase the rate at which pupils make progress, particularly that of the most able, by making sure that teachers always:
 - challenge pupils, especially the most able, by consistently setting demanding work in all lessons
 - ensure marking and feedback inform pupils of exactly how they can improve their work and that they check that pupils respond to the advice or further challenge that they are given.
- Raise attainment in phonics so that, by the end of Year 1, standards are at least average by ensuring pupils are taught the skills of linking letters to the sounds they make at appropriate levels of difficulty to suit their different abilities.
- Ensure leaders give more focus to the early identification of the most able pupils in order to optimise their opportunities to reach higher levels.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of the school. She is ably supported by the deputy headteacher.
- School leaders have successfully established a friendly and purposeful atmosphere where everyone is valued. This was exemplified by one member of staff who said, 'Everyone is welcomed into our school. It's a school in which everyone works hard and do all they can for the children.'
- The management of teachers' performance is thorough. Leaders know where the best practice exists and this is shared within the school. There is a clear link between teachers' performance and their salary progression.
- The school has rigorous and robust systems in place to check pupils' progress and the standards they attain, accurately. They are very effective in helping the school to identify and target quickly pupils who may be at risk of underachieving, enabling leaders to plan timely support and accelerate pupils' progress. However, leaders have not yet focused their efforts enough on identifying the most able pupils earlier in order to optimise opportunities for more pupils to reach higher levels.
- Careful thought has been given to how leaders will maintain the extensive level of information they have on pupils' progress as the school implements the new National Curriculum. Plans are already under way to help staff to assess accurately the level that their pupils are working at and to measure the progress that they make.
- The whole of the staff team including administrative, building maintenance and canteen make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This results in outstanding behaviour and attitudes to learning in lessons, around the school and on the playground. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn about other faiths, customs and traditions through religious education, the arts, music and themed topics and educational visits. The school is successful in promoting a strong emphasis on tolerance and equality, which prepares pupils well for life in a modern Britain.
- Discrimination of any kind is successfully discouraged. Pupils from various cultures get on together well and show each other respect.
- Teachers know their pupils very well. As a result, the school is well placed to make sure all pupils have an equal opportunity to do well. This has resulted in the gaps between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils closing. In some years, disadvantaged pupils outperform non-disadvantaged pupils. This is evidence of the good use of the pupil premium funding. Parents, too, recognise the school's work to support all pupils. This was exemplified by one parent who said, 'I have always observed that my son has always been treated as an individual. The teachers have known his strengths and worked on his weaknesses.'
- The primary school sport funding is used very successfully. There is a wide range of after-school and lunchtime sporting activities on offer as well as specialist coaches working with pupils and staff to improve their skills. This has led to high levels of participation in different sports by pupils of all ages and success in local tournaments.
- The school works extremely closely with parents and actively encourages them to be involved in the school's work, for instance, through coming into school at the beginning of the day and visiting the classrooms with their children to see the work they are doing as well as by attending the many workshops designed to help them support their children's learning at home.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors show a keen interest in the school's work and are extremely proud of the school community.
 - They bring a wide range of relevant and useful skills and expertise to the school to challenge and hold leaders effectively to account through the scrutiny of data and regular visits.
 - Governors are well-informed by senior leaders. Individual governors monitor specific areas, such as the use of the pupil premium funds or arrangements for safeguarding and then discuss their findings at governors' meetings.
 - Governors have a good understanding of data and how the school is performing compared to other schools nationally. In addition, governors receive accurate information about the quality of teaching. They understand requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases reflecting the progress that pupils make.
 - Governors are aware of how additional funding is spent and its impact on pupils' progress. They help to ensure that accurate decisions are made about allocating finances, including the primary sport funding, and rewarding teachers appropriately for their work. All safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and considerate to each other and to adults. They are very proud of their school, make a significant contribution to the tidiness and attractiveness of corridors and classrooms, and are eager to show visitors the high-quality displays which celebrate and value pupils' achievements and efforts.
- Around school, pupils are extremely polite, calm, respectful and exceptionally considerate of others. They understand the impact of their actions on others and try to be kind and understanding at all times. Hence, the school remains a happy and welcoming place for all. These attitudes epitomise the school's motto, 'Together we can really make a difference.' All parents who spoke with inspectors and who responded to the school's survey agree that behaviour is excellent.
- Pupils show maturity and make a good contribution to the school community by taking on many roles and responsibilities such as becoming active members of the anti-bullying and anti-racist teams, 'Purple Pelicans,' or the eco team and the school council.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are developed well through all aspects of school life. Lots of opportunities for reflection about right and wrong, working together and understanding people of other faiths and backgrounds help pupils to develop tolerance, respect and friendships across a wide range of groups. This was articulated very well by one pupil who said, 'We help everyone to get on together. We can see past the colour and language and see the person – their heart and their mind.'
- Pupils say they enjoy school. They are punctual. The very strong partnership the school has with families and the worthwhile initiatives it has introduced to encourage regular attendance are having a positive impact and attendance is rising and is now closer to average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils and parents have total confidence in the school's ability to keep children safe.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe in school because adults look after them very well. They know that adults in the school will listen to their concerns and do all they can to help to resolve them. Parents are confident that their children are very well looked after. Pupils with disabilities or any special educational needs or vulnerabilities are treated very sensitively by adults and by pupils.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what comprises bullying and the many forms that it can take. They say bullying is extremely rare but are very confident that any unacceptable behaviour is tackled very quickly by adults.
- Pupils have a keen awareness of the potential dangers they may face when using social media and know exactly what they should do if they have a concern. This is because cyber-bullying and the dangers of the internet are taught in assemblies, discussed in classrooms and taught in lessons.
- Governors visit the school regularly to carry out checks on safety and act immediately upon their findings.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good throughout the school. This is reflected in pupils' good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics. The work seen in pupils' books confirms that they make good progress.
- Relationships with pupils are a strength and there is a very impressive level of mutual respect and trust. This has resulted in the development of a very positive climate for learning in which pupils can learn and feel safe. Consequently, pupils are prepared to work hard and have developed a 'willing-to-have-a-go' attitude because they are not afraid of making mistakes.
- Teachers have high expectations of what most pupils can achieve and plan lessons accordingly. However, on occasions, teachers do not plan work that is hard enough for the most able pupils and so the progress of some pupils is not as rapid as it might be.
- The teaching of linking letters and sounds is improving rapidly although its impact is not fully evident. This is because, on occasions, pupils are not given work which is set at the right level.
- Pupils are given frequent opportunities to read for pleasure and to retrieve information which they then apply to their own writing across a wide range of interesting topics. For example, a Year 6 pupil studying a topic based on the school's Global Theme Week used her knowledge of comparing and contrasting to write, 'It is an interesting fact that, while Australia is the largest island in the world, it is the smallest continent.'

- In guided reading, pupils are helped to develop their comprehension and inference skills.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. In pupils' books, there is a well-planned balance of calculations and problem-solving activities, in which mathematical knowledge and skills practised previously, can be applied.
- The teaching of writing is good. Pupils write confidently and fluently, benefiting from regular opportunities to exchange ideas and talk through and plan how they intend to write. They skilfully apply their knowledge of punctuation and grammar to improve the quality of their stories.
- Mostly, teachers give very good consideration to pupils' varying needs so that the work provided meets their needs and abilities. Those who find learning more difficult and those who have specific learning needs are supported well by their teachers and skilled learning support assistants, who adapt the work so it is at the right level for them. Occasionally though, opportunities to challenge pupils are missed, especially for the most able. This limits the rate at which they make progress and the opportunities they have to reach the standards of which they are capable.
- Classrooms, corridors and the library are attractive and tidy with eye-catching displays of pupils' work across a range of topics. Pupils use highly-effective 'working walls' to help understand what is expected of them, to support their learning and help them to work things out for themselves.
- Marking does not always give pupils clear enough advice on how they can improve their work. Even when advice is given, teachers do not do enough to make sure pupils have made corrections or acted on their advice to speed up learning.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Small but significant numbers of pupils, all with very little knowledge of English, join the school during both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. These pupils make good progress but do not always attain national standards.
- From their low starting points at the beginning of Year 1, pupils make good progress. As a result, the proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly in line with the national average. However, the proportion who reach the higher Level 3 is well-below average, especially in reading.
- In 2013, standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average. These standards reflect very good progress from pupils' starting points. In 2014 standards fell, especially in reading and writing. This was due to the composition of the cohort, the small but significant proportion of pupils who joined the school throughout Key Stage 2 and the impact this had on the proportion of pupils who reached the higher Level 5. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who made expected and better-than-expected progress was close to the national average. As a result, most pupils reached the average standard in writing and mathematics. However, the proportion reaching the average standard in reading was below average.
- The school's own data and inspection evidence indicate that progress made by all groups of pupils in all current year groups in the school is above average and standards are improving rapidly.
- Reading is a priority throughout the school. The teaching of phonics is enabling younger pupils to tackle new and unfamiliar words with greater confidence.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy reading and talk with enthusiasm about the stories that adults read with them. They make good progress yet the proportion who reach the expected level in the Year 1 phonics check is well-below average. By the end of Year 2, however, the proportion reaching this level is above average.
- As pupils move through the school, they continue to develop a love of reading. This was exemplified by a group of Year 6 pupils who agreed that, 'Books can be your best friend. You can get sucked into and lost in the story and feel the emotions of the characters.'
- Pupils' writing is helped by the emphasis that is given to reading, which boosts the range of words they understand and use, and to speaking and explaining ideas in lessons. This is increasingly reflected throughout pupils' writing, enhancing the fluency and meaning of what they write. For example, in Year 6, one pupil wrote, 'The castle stood on its own, saying nothing but threatening everything, hiding in the darkness.'
- Pupils attain especially well in their learning of grammar, punctuation and spelling, where their attainment is consistently above average. This is as a result of well-planned teaching, based upon regular checks on the progress being made by every pupil throughout the school.
- Pupils are competent mathematicians. Their ability to complete numerical calculations is secure. However, progress in problem-solving is less rapid due to fewer opportunities to undertake challenging investigations.

- Throughout Key Stage 2, the most able pupils make good progress. This is reflected in the much higher proportion of pupils who, at Key Stage 2, reach the higher Level 5 than the proportion who reached the higher Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because accurate assessment of their skills ensures that extra support and work in lessons successfully address their specific learning needs.
- Disadvantaged pupils, all of whom have English as an additional language, who received support from the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2014, were two terms behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in mathematics, three terms behind in reading, and three terms behind in writing. In all current year groups, disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at least in line with and sometimes at higher rates than their peers in school. As a result, standards are rising rapidly.
- All the newcomers who join the school during Key Stage 2 speak English as an additional language. They make good progress in school to close the gaps in their learning especially in writing in sentences, vocabulary and fluency in their reading and writing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start in the early years with skills which, for the overwhelming majority, are below those typical for their age. A few are significantly below, especially in communication and language and mathematics and a few have skills typical for their age.
- The proportion of children who, in 2014, reached a good level of development was well above that of 2013. Despite this improvement, standards remained below average. However, the rate at which children are now making progress continues to increase. This is because staff have a very clear understanding of children's knowledge and skills, and plan exciting learning activities which are well matched to individual children's interests and needs.
- Vital to this good progress is the focus on developing children's communication and personal skills. Adults sensitively explain how to behave in the early years, what the routines are and gently encourage children to work and play together and to support each other. Consequently, children are happy, settle down well to the school's way of working, are eager to learn and enjoy school life. Behaviour is often exemplary.
- Adults use every opportunity to develop children's language skills. For example, they encouraged children to talk about the different shapes and colours of bricks while constructing a town and children talked enthusiastically about the animals in the Arctic while taking on the role of Inuits in the exciting and imaginative igloo role play area. Children display great enjoyment in their work, learn to respect each other and behave well. This helps them to learn.
- The quality of teaching is good and provides a secure base for future learning throughout the rest of the school. Assessments are used well to plan future learning experiences that match children's needs and interests. This promotes good gains in their learning.
- The indoor and outdoor spaces provide children with vibrant learning areas. Resources are easily accessible to the children and are well chosen to stimulate interest. They contribute well to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good leadership of the early years ensures that children's achievement and the quality of teaching are good. Induction into the Reception class is given a high priority and excellent links are established with parents from the time children first enter school. This has a positive impact on their learning and on their personal, social and emotional development.

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	105679
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	456150

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	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Shoukat Ali
Headteacher	Sue Crowson
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2012
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