

High Lawn Primary School

Holden Avenue, Sharples, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 7EX

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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.

- Almost every parent who returned a survey said they would recommend High Lawn to other parents. Pupils and staff are proud of the school which is very well led by the acting headteacher.
- Children get a good start to their school lives in the Nursery and Reception Classes. The leader of teaching in the early years has made effective changes to improve teaching.
- All groups of pupils, across the school, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, and also in other subjects such as French, music, science and computing.
- Teaching in most subjects is good. The school's effective use of high-quality teaching assistants is a strength which benefits the less-able and the most able pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and this is one of the main reasons why they make such good progress in lessons. Pupils are very keen, attentive, eager, and love facing challenging work. They are a real credit to the school.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is shown in the way they play and work harmoniously together regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.
- Senior leaders and governors have invested in good quality staff training. This has resulted in improvements to teaching and pupils' reading which is now a strength. Teaching for the youngest children has improved significantly.
- Teachers' questioning skills and their checks on pupils' learning during lessons have improved and enable all groups of pupils to make good progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Across the school, the most able pupils who are supported by the pupil premium do not attain the highest standards.
- Although pupils feel safe and the school prepares them well to avoid danger when using the internet, more could be done to educate and protect pupils about extremist behaviours in society.
- Leaders at all levels check on the work of the school frequently and thoroughly. The checks on the quality of pupils' work do not always identify precisely what should be done to further raise the quality of teaching.
- Governors do not thoroughly check the impact of external sources of funding on outcomes for pupils. The school has overspent its allocated budget.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in every class and in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, music, geography, physical education (PE) and French. They looked through pupils' work which included seeing how they had been taught in history, geography and science.
- They met with a range of staff including the teacher who coordinates teaching for pupils with special educational needs, the leader of the early years provision (Reception and Nursery classes) and teachers who lead teaching in different subjects. An inspector also met with the school's social worker.
- Inspectors held discussions with six members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- At the start of the school day and during a class assembly, inspectors met with parents. An inspector also met with a group of parents in the early years. They considered the views of 44 parents who completed Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and considered 114 questionnaires replicating the questions in the parent view survey.
- Inspectors considered the views of 47 Year 6 pupils and they met with a range of pupils from other classes in a meeting and also around the school in classes and at play and lunch times.

Inspection team

Allan Torr, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Martin Bell

Her Majesty's Inspector

Terry Bond

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- High Lawn is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is lower than the national average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided for those pupils who are deemed by the government to be disadvantaged because they are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- Just under a quarter of pupils have a minority ethnic heritage, which is a lower proportion than the national average.
- There are no disabled pupils. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is slightly lower than the national average.
- There were no pupils at the time of the inspection educated off-site in alternative provision or with part-time timetables.
- The school manages before- and after-school provision and caters for pupils from neighbouring schools.
- The school has a 52 place part-time Nursery class which operates every day for a morning or an afternoon session.
- The headteacher left at the start of the autumn term on a 12 month sabbatical. However, he resigned in the autumn term. Since the summer, the school has been led by the deputy headteacher as acting headteacher. An assistant headteacher took over his role as an acting deputy headteacher in autumn 2014.
- Some teachers provide support for other schools in the local authority, verifying the accuracy of other schools' assessments of pupils' attainment.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectation for pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Across the school, ensure that a greater proportion of the pupils who are supported by the pupil premium attain the higher standards in each subject.
- Teach pupils about how to protect themselves from extremist behaviours in society.
- When checking the quality of pupils' work, identify precisely what should be done in each subject to further raise the quality of teaching.
- Make sure the governing body checks thoroughly the impact of all sources of funding on outcomes for pupils and does not overspend its allocated budget.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Staff, parents and pupils all have confidence in the leadership of the school and share the senior leaders' vision to make High Lawn 'sparkle.' A key strength of leadership is the in-depth knowledge leaders have of families and staff. As one leader put it, 'We are a large school with a small school philosophy'. The acting headteacher has worked hard to develop a positive team ethic among staff. He has led the school very well in the absence of a permanent headteacher and has been supported ably by a high-quality senior leadership team. They have maintained and raised expectations of pupils' behaviour and the quality of teaching.
- Teachers who lead aspects of the school's work share in the responsibility and accountability for the success of the school. They provide effective leadership. The teacher who coordinates the school's work with pupils who have special educational needs provides highly effective leadership. She takes great care when appointing staff to work with individual pupils that they have the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the needs of the child. She checks on their work frequently and provides useful advice and guidance through regular teaching assistant meetings in how to improve their practice such as questioning and teaching skills.
- Leaders check on the quality of teaching frequently by observing lessons, looking at pupils' work, making short visits to lessons and evaluating pupils' behaviour. The leadership of teaching is effective. The system to check on the school's work is detailed and thorough, and takes into account the views of parents and pupils in well-devised and detailed surveys. The feedback to teachers has helped them to improve their teaching over time and a good feature is the focus on all subjects, not just English and mathematics. The checks on pupils' work could be more helpful in identifying what precisely needs to be improved in each subject to raise the quality of teaching to outstanding. Some of the evaluations are too vague and low-level such as 'differentiation is clear.' As a result, the checks on pupils' work have not identified the overuse of worksheets which occasionally stifle pupils' thinking and writing skills.
- Senior leaders have been proactive in their preparation for the introduction of the new National Curriculum. Staff have been trained and have been involved in checking on the impact of the new topics and curriculum content. They have also made sure that they are covering fundamental British values by for example, pupils' studying democracy, writing a bill of rights, and taking part in a parliamentary workshop. There are opportunities for pupils to volunteer and take up roles and responsibilities in the school and in the local community. Year 4 pupils, for example, took part in a project entitled Read to Dogs which is supported by the charity Pets as Therapy.
- There have been no requests to opt out of the curriculum for faith or cultural reasons and, as a result, there is equal access to the curriculum for all pupils. There is no segregation in lessons or anywhere in the school. Pupils play and work harmoniously regardless of gender, age or ethnicity. It was good to see, for example, in a Year 2 PE lesson pupils of different ethnicities and genders selecting to perform their dance in pairs mirroring each other's movements. There is no discrimination in the school. Almost everyone in Year 6 responded that High Lawn would be safe if you came from another country, if you were disabled, had a different faith or if you were gay or transgender.
- Pupils have good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development which mainly comes from a rich diet of activities in the curriculum, including trips and visits. In a French lesson for example, pupils watched closely as two French children played La Marelle (hopscotch) and learnt to appreciate life in France. Year 5 pupils are taught to appreciate the words, rhythms and music of Africa through high-quality music tuition provided by the Bolton music service. Pupils visit churches and a synagogue while other visits introduce them to culture such as theatre, music and dance.
- There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities such as choir, Spanish club, art and sculpture, chess, film club, 'mathletics' and football.
- The sport premium is a grant of money from the government to ensure a legacy following the 2012 Olympic Games. The school, in the past has not used this grant wisely. The external coaches brought in have not had the desired impact on increasing competitive sport, increasing skill levels, widening the range of sport and activities or improving teachers' skills. Governors are not holding the external coaches well enough to account. The acting headteacher has already started to take action to improve the use of the sport premium.
- Senior leaders have made good use of the pupil premium to reduce the attainment gap between groups of pupils over the last three years. This has been done through careful tracking of pupils' progress, devising lessons to tackle the needs of individual pupils and identifying staff with specific skills that will help individual pupils. There is still some way to go to make sure that the most-able pupils attain the highest levels, for example in 2014 no pupil supported by the grant attained the higher Level 5 in reading, writing

and mathematics. Leaders have noted this and have included some pupils into a higher level mathematics group.

- The systems to protect pupils and keep them safe (safeguarding) is a high priority. There are effective procedures in place to check on the background of adults to ensure that they are cleared to work with children. There are comprehensive and detailed systems to ensure risk assessments are in place. There is a high number of staff with first aid qualifications and all staff have been trained in child protection and, most recently, safety when using technology.
- The local authority provides a steadying hand guiding the school and providing appropriate challenge and support. As a result of a focused day looking into pupils' reading skills through the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters represent), the local authority provided advice about how to improve teaching. This advice was used successfully and, as a result, there has been a year-on-year improvement in pupils' ability to use phonics to read words.
- School leaders are outward looking and have developed useful partnerships with outside agencies such as social workers, the police, health visitors and charities to enhance the school's provision. Childline, for example, are booked in to do some focused work with Year 5 and 6 pupils.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and have a range of skills which have allowed them to provide helpful support and advice for school leaders. They have an overview of performance management systems and the actions taken to reward good teaching and tackle underperformance. They also have an appropriate overview of the quality of teaching, of pupils' attainment and progress, and of the curriculum. This, in part, is because governors are committed and make frequent visits to the school and join in with meetings and school training events. They regularly audit the skills of members of the governing body and identify training based on any relative areas of weakness. There is an effective system in place to regularly check, update and ratify policies and procedures.
 - The budget is in deficit because the governors have overspent. There is a plan in place to reduce the overspend in the next two years but governors must make sure there is financial probity. The governors do not evaluate well enough the impact of external funds against the reason why the fund has been allocated.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This view is echoed by the vast majority of parents and staff who also believe behaviour to be consistently well managed. There are striking examples of staff reacting quickly following rare incidents of poor behaviour to make sure there is no repeat in the following days and weeks.
- In class, pupils' behaviour is impeccable for the vast majority of time. A typical response from a Year 6 pupil was, 'The behaviour is fantastic. We can all get on with our work. There is a bit of talking and chatting but not much.' Pupils are keen to learn, are eager, attentive and there is no time lost at the start of or during lessons waiting for pupils to listen and settle into lessons. One of the main reasons why pupils make good progress is because of their attitudes to school and their lessons.
- Pupils take pride in their work, their presentation and they relish challenging activities. They cooperate well, regardless of age, gender or background. In one lesson, for example, a Year 6 boy worked diligently next to a girl, sharing ideas and suggestions. They reminded each other to check their targets for improvement, corrected and edited each other's work.
- Pupils respond as well to their usual class teachers as they do to visiting teachers, students, teaching assistants and lunchtime and office staff. They quickly and quietly respond to instructions and requests.
- Around school, pupils are friendly and polite. They frequently hold the door open for each other and for adults, and display good manners. There have been very few incidents of poor behaviour such as racist or homophobic language in the last few years. Year 6 pupils confirmed to inspectors that name-calling because of someone's appearance, special educational needs or their religion is rare. They also confirmed that they are not teased through online systems such as social media.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils confirmed that the school helps them to be safe when using the road and they have tackled aspects of safety such as what to do to prevent fires, how to be safe near water, and how to avoid taking drugs and the dangers of smoking.
- Pupils also confirmed that the staff are caring and there is always someone friendly they can go to if they have a problem. One pupil commented: 'They help you with stress, they provide for you and help you if you are stuck.'
- One aspect of safety that is not covered in as much detail is how pupils can protect themselves in more extreme situations such as avoiding becoming part of a gang, being forced into marriage, carrying weapons, or avoiding radicalisation.
- The school has provided some very good work on how to stay safe when using the internet, for example by avoiding downloading attachments and giving out any personal details. As a result, pupils said they feel secure in knowing how to report any incidents.

The quality of teaching is good

- Lessons, according to pupils, are fun and challenging, particularly in English and mathematics. In one Year 4 mathematics lesson, the most able pupils were given highly complex problems to solve which developed a deeper understanding of the area of shapes. The activity also developed their skills in explaining their thinking by teaching each other how to solve the calculations. In a Year 6 lesson pupils used tablet computers to create stories based on egg characters they had created. They swapped and shared photographs of each other's egg characters and successfully built, edited and adapted a plot for their story.
- On a few occasions, in a few subjects, the activities were not as challenging as they could be. Pupils who could write fluently and expressively for example were given worksheets to complete with the words already given to them; this hindered their progress and their thinking.
- A key strength of teaching is adults' questioning skills which was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. During lessons, they gauge pupils' understanding and use the responses to refine or change their teaching. They ask a range of questions which make pupils think more deeply, recall facts and knowledge, apply their skills or explain their reasoning. This range of skilfully crafted questions enables pupils to make good progress.
- Another strength is the quality and deployment of teaching assistants. They are highly active throughout every lesson working with individuals or groups of pupils including the most able. Their explanations and subject knowledge enable pupils to make progress in their work.
- Teaching pupils with special educational needs is effective. The senior leaders identify what each pupil needs to learn and then identify the skilled teacher or teaching assistant they need to help them make better progress. This focus on the pupil's needs is one of the reasons why teaching is so effective. Another reason is the good use of resources and visual images to help pupils understand what they are learning.
- Teaching is good across a range of subjects including music, computing and French. This is because the teachers are highly skilled and knowledgeable; they have very good specialist knowledge and high expectations. In a music lesson for example, the specialist music teacher enabled pupils to learn musical terminology such as 'forte' and 'crescendo', and learn how to make different sounds on percussive drums using different shapes and strokes of the hand. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were playing a high-quality tune with excellent attention to beat and rhythm.

The achievement of pupils is good

- All groups of pupils achieve well. The proportion of pupils that make expected and better than expected progress in Key Stage 2 was similar in 2014 to the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is particularly good. Almost every pupil attains the level of reading that is expected for their age and increasingly, year-on-year, a higher proportion of pupils attain the higher levels. In a reading lesson in Year 5, pupils seated in a group posed questions for each other based on the text and asked questions such as 'Do we all agree?', 'Are there any words we do not understand?', and took charge of their own learning. The questions they asked made other pupils in the group think and explain their ideas about the passage.
- Most pupils attain the writing standards they should for their age and between a third and a half of pupils attain the higher levels. Most pupils vary their sentences well and learn how to use features of grammar such as subordinate clauses and embedded clauses. In most classes, they have the chance to link their

writing to the topic they are learning about; for example, writing newspaper stories depicting the Viking invasion. There are also instances where pupils write for a real purpose such as a letter to the editor of Blue Peter through which they learn the features of informal and formal writing.

- In mathematics, pupils' achievement is good. Almost every pupil in each class is at the level expected for their age and, in some classes, around a half of pupils attain the higher levels. Pupils revise and revisit number facts frequently in lessons. In a Year 5 lesson for example, pupils had to think of different ways of finding the answer of 0.5. They suggested divisions, negative numbers, brackets, fractions and decimals, further developing their fluency. In the better teaching, pupils were asked to explain their reasoning and thinking in words or in writing.
- Pupils who are known to be disadvantaged achieve well and the gap in attainment closes between them and other pupils in their year group as they move up through the school. By the end of Year 6 in 2014 in reading disadvantaged pupils were the equivalent of a term and a half behind other pupils in the school and a term behind other pupils nationally. In writing, this group of pupils was close to a year behind other pupils in the school but compared with other pupils nationally they were two and a half terms behind. In mathematics in 2014, Year 6 disadvantaged pupils were a year behind other pupils in the school and two and a half terms behind other pupils nationally. Although most disadvantaged pupils attained the expected Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics, none attained Level 5 which accounts for the relative gap in attainment between this group of pupils and others in the school. Evidence from pupils' books, from lessons and from the school's data shows that they achieve well but few disadvantaged pupils attain the higher levels.
- The most able pupils achieve well. A similar proportion to the national average attain the higher Level 5. In mathematics, a group of most able pupils skilfully calculated the surface area and volume of a cuboid. They helped each other understand the concept of surface area by using physical resources and were able to use one dimension of a cuboid to consider the different possible lengths of the other dimensions. These activities challenged and deepened pupils' thinking.
- Pupils who are known to have special educational needs make good progress relative to their needs. The teachers identify the educational barrier to their learning as early as they can and then skilfully identify the teaching they need for them to make progress. They are taught in lessons by the teacher and are sometimes supported by teaching assistants but expectations are high and this group of pupils is expected to attain as highly as the rest of the class.

The early years provision

is good

- Some parents of children who are in the school's Nursery and Reception praised the arrangements to help their children as they start at High Lawn. A typical comment was, 'I would like to praise all the Foundation Stage staff for providing such a warm, nurturing and stimulating start to my children's school life.'
- The school communicates well and provides parents with good information in starter packs, reading diaries, home and Nursery visits, weekly newsletters and in workshops such as 'meet the teacher' and 'phonics workshop.'
- Parents also praised the changes that have taken place since September under the leadership of the new leader of the early years. She has improved the quality and use of the 'my learning journey' booklets, which now provide a high quality record of a child's achievement. She is highly organised and has a clear vision for improvement. Her skills are highly thought of by the local authority which uses her to check on the accuracy of teachers' assessments of children's skills at other schools in Bolton.
- There is no pattern to children's starting points which vary significantly from year to year. It is clear children make good progress particularly in adult-led activities which are well-focused, fun and purposeful. In these sessions, adults use questioning well to deepen children's thinking, knowledge and their ability to apply their skills. The activities are well-devised based on the needs of each group of children.
- Children make less progress in some outdoor activities and at times when they can self-select what they want to do. The early years leader has already noticed this and has started to introduce measures to make sure all learning is purposeful.
- In 2014, too few children reached the level of development expected for their age, particularly those who are supported by the pupil premium and, as a result, were not ready for Year 1. Too few most able children supported by the pupil premium, attained the highest possible standards. This seems to have been a one-off year because the children currently working in the early years are making good progress. They settle into their established routines, have a very positive attitude to their learning, and are keen and eager to talk about their work.

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	105156
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	448300

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	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Currid
Acting Headteacher	David Lane
Date of previous school inspection	13 January 2010
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