



# Highfield Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 105182  
**LEA** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 277311  
**Inspection dates** 17 October 2005 to 18 October 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Robert Robinson CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Marsh Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Farnworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0AP
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 571749
<b>Number on roll</b>	308	<b>Fax number</b>	01204 793756
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr C Dennis
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs M Parrish

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 17 October 2005 - 18 October 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 277311
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

This is an average sized primary school for pupils age 4 to 11. Most pupils are of white British heritage with a below average proportion from other ethnic groups. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. Indications are that the local area is socially and economically disadvantaged. Children's attainment on entry is below average. The proportion of pupils who move to the school at other than the normal admission times is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and there are an average proportion of pupils with statements of special need. The school gained a School Achievement Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2003.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Highfield Primary is a good school. Its overall effectiveness is good which agrees with the school's view, though some aspects of its work are outstanding. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils, including children in the Reception class and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make good progress because teaching is good. Standards in reading have improved to about the national average at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection. However, standards in writing, although at the national average, do not match the recent improvements in reading. Personal development is outstanding. Pupils of all ages, abilities and backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. Pupils enjoy coming to school, their behaviour is excellent and they respond very well to the outstanding, supportive care they receive. Leadership and management of the school are good, including governance, middle management and subject coordinators. A particular strength is the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The recently introduced initiative to spread leadership and management amongst all staff is innovative. However, the impact on learning has not yet been assessed. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school is well placed to improve further because it has an exceptionally good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. Parents are very appreciative of the education provided for their children because of the commitment of staff and the way they work together for the benefit of pupils. The school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in writing in English lessons and in other subjects.
- Evaluate the impact on learning of the new ways in which the school is led and managed.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Achievement and standards are good. Children in the Reception enter school with below average standards and make good progress, as a result by the end of the Reception Year standards are close to those expected nationally. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build well on their prior attainment and make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 standards are average. However, although broadly average, writing standards are not as high as those in reading. This is especially evident when the proportions of pupils attaining the higher Level 3, in reading and writing, are compared. The school has been successful in raising standards in reading. Action has been taken to raise standards in writing and in the 2005 national tests the gap between performance in reading and writing narrowed.

In the 2004, national tests at the end of Year 6, standards were average and progress relative to their attainments at the end of Year 2 was just above average. Boys' progress and the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities were significantly

higher than average. In 2005, standards improved significantly and the progress of these pupils since the end of Year 2 also improved. The very challenging targets set for pupils to reach by the end of Year 6 in 2005 were met in English and mathematics. The achievement of pupils in reading and writing compared to their results at the end of Year 2 were good. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the level expected of their age or the higher level in writing was lower than that in reading.

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enjoy their learning and achieve well because of good teaching. By the end of Year 6, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education because of their sound acquisition of basics skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT).

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal and social development is outstanding and their behaviour is excellent. In lessons they listen very carefully and work together extremely well in pairs and in groups. Pupils take great delight in showing visitors displays around the school which reflect very well their achievements. Pupils show exceptional respect and care for others, they empathise with the feelings and views of others and delight in each other's successes. This was shown clearly in an assembly when pupils shared in the pleasure of others as they received awards. Pupils have a very good understanding of multicultural issues and they talk with good knowledge and enthusiasm about a visit to a Hindu temple.

Through learning about healthy lifestyles, pupils develop a wider understanding of how to keep healthy, such as the need to drink water regularly and take part in physical activity. Pupils feel safe at the school because of the very good relationships between pupils and with staff. Pupils develop skills which contribute effectively to their social and economic well-being; for example, pupils in Year 6 write their own school magazine. The school council gives pupils an active voice in shaping the direction of the school and pupils have seen some of their ideas come to fruition. Attendance is good overall because pupils enjoy their learning.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and work hard to meet the needs of all pupils. The recent, strong emphasis on planning to develop literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects is assisting pupils' learning in writing and mathematics.

In the Reception class, a broad range of activities, linked to each area of learning, both in the classroom and the outdoor area interests the children and assists their good progress. The organisation of learning helps children to be confident learners. A

particular strength is the monitoring of children's progress and using this information to plan future learning.

In Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are good. The high consistency of good or better teaching assists pupils' learning. The best teaching is characterised by good pace, creativity and the effective targeting of tasks to meet pupils' needs. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching, allied to firm but positive behaviour management result in pupils enjoying learning, treating staff with great respect and behaving exceptionally well.

The marking of pupils' work is good because it provides clear guidance to pupils of how well they had done and how they can improve their work. Individual targets, often displayed at the front of their books, highlight the next step of learning. Pupils work hard to achieve their targets.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make particularly good progress as a result of good teaching and support which ensures that their work is linked well to the targets in their individual education plans. Improvements in the teaching of writing are beginning to have a positive effect; for example, lower attaining older pupils, particularly boys, made very good progress when writing was linked outstandingly well to a practical 'bun making' activity.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum, including the provision for children in the Reception class, is good. It fully meets requirements and matches the needs and interests of all pupils well resulting in them achieving well. The school has embraced very well the recent national initiative to widen the curriculum; for example, on a Monday morning a variety of stimulating lessons such as, French, music and ICT, ensures a good start to the week.

Very good opportunities are available for pupils to engage in sports both within the school day and during out of school activities. These include football, netball, rounders and swimming. In addition, music, visits to local places of interest and visitors to school, enrich the curriculum further. As a result of the good curriculum, pupils enjoy learning. As one pupil enthusiastically stated, after an outstanding music lesson: 'that was fun'.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school takes outstanding care of all its children. Adults are vigilant in watching over, caring for and supporting each child. Pupils openly express their trust in teachers and other adults and a strong ethos of care permeates all aspects of school life, work and relationships. As a result, pupils are confident and successful learners. Support for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. The school is sympathetic to the needs of children in public care and those from the travellers' community. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and as a result make good progress towards meeting the targets in their individual education plans. Child

protection arrangements and the procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are very good. Pupils grow and flourish within the community of Highfield School.

Teachers know the pupils' capabilities; they monitor and assess their work and give very clear guidance on how they might improve it. The checking of pupils' progress is a strength of the school. Regular teacher assessments and a range of tests track children's attainment, not just in respect to academic achievement but also in personal development. This extensive database underpins teachers' judgements about pupils' progress and is used to organise teaching groups to benefit their learning. Efficient systems for recording and using this information are in place and accessible to all staff.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's excellent leadership is based on ensuring that all pupils achieve their potential. They have set out a strong vision for the school's future that is based on regular and rigorous self-evaluation. Detailed planning, involving all members of the leadership team, ensure that the school clearly knows its current strengths and areas for improvement.

Recently, corporate groups, 'faculties', have been set up with a lead teacher and representatives of teachers and teaching assistants from throughout the school to give staff enhanced leadership roles. The faculties, such as healthy lifestyles, inclusion and creative arts, have a strong focus on enriching the curriculum and driving up standards further, as well as providing opportunities for professional development of all staff. This initiative is at an early stage and the impact of these changes is yet to be felt and assessed in respect of the workload of staff and standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are aware that the changes in organisation will require further review of all other leadership structures as running alongside this new leadership organisation, at present, are the existing successful curriculum management and planning groups.

The senior management team has a clear focus on improving pupils' learning, within a caring environment. The use of a wide range of assessment strategies, including the very good use of data, enables the school to allocate resources effectively and to set challenging targets. These strengths in management have contributed significantly to pupils' progress.

The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well. Governors are supportive, well informed and committed to the school and play their part in helping the school to move forward.

Parents and children are consulted about aspects of school life and feel that their views are listened to and acted upon. The school has very strong support from parents and one wrote saying 'I am proud and happy to send my child to a school that values every child's progress and achievement'.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit and we want to share with you what we thought about your school.

What we liked most about your school

- We are pleased that you behave extremely well and work hard in lessons and all get on so well together.
- We think that the teachers and other staff look after you exceptionally well.
- We are glad that you are taught well so you make good progress in your learning and enjoy school.
- Your headteacher and other senior staff know how to make your school better.
- Your parents and carers are very pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- We want you to continue to work hard to improve your writing in English lessons and in other subjects.
- Teachers and other staff are working together to make your learning more enjoyable and worthwhile and we want them to find out how their new roles are helping you to improve your learning.

We appreciated talking to you about your work and watching you learn, we wish you well for the future.