



Halton Lodge Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111229
LEA Halton
Inspection number 278629
Inspection dates 29 March 2006 to 30 March 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Colin Smith CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Grangeway
School category	Community		Runcorn
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Cheshire WA7 5LU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01928 564053
Number on roll	218	Fax number	01928 574865
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Higginson
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Gaynor Dickson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Halton Lodge is an average sized primary school that serves a deprived community. The vast majority of children are of White British heritage and none of them are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals is over twice the national average. The percentage of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is above the national average. Many children enter school with attainment that is below the levels expected for their age. The school was burnt down in 2003. Children were housed in temporary accommodation in a local high school and later in prefabricated classrooms. The new school opened in November 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides good value for money. Many children enter school with low attainment, but the good quality of provision and standards achieved in the Foundation Stage help children to begin to catch up. Children achieve well overall, particularly in Reception and in Years 1, 2 and 6. They reach the standards expected nationally in English, mathematics and science before moving on to high school. Children's personal development is good and their behaviour excellent. Their safety and well-being are assured through exemplary levels of care, good guidance and support and very effective links with external agencies. Staff and parents are correct in regarding these areas as good. At the beginning of the school year, senior staff and governors judged leadership and management, teaching and learning and the curriculum to be satisfactory. This modest judgement was made when children were still in temporary accommodation and influenced by the lower levels that standards had fallen to at the time of the fire. Since moving into the new school, further improvements have been made. Standards are rising because of effective leadership, good teaching and the well-organised curriculum. These factors illustrate the school's good capacity for improvement in the face of difficult circumstances. Staff and governors know their school well. They recognise that children's achievement in Years 3, 4 and 5 is not as rapid as in the other parts of the school. They are also aware of the weaknesses in children's science investigation skills, which are currently preventing some of the more able children from fulfilling their potential.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in Years 3, 4 and 5 to match the good progress that children make in other parts of the school.
- Improve children's skills of investigation in science and ensure that all of the more able children reach the standard of which they are capable.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children achieve well overall. They enter school with attainment lower than expected for their age. Good progress in the Foundation Stage enables three quarters of Reception children to reach the goals expected in all areas of learning. Sustained good achievement in Years 1 and 2 ensures that standards match those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the key stage. This was the picture in 2005 and in the three preceding years. Children's achievement levels out in Years 3, 4 and 5. Although satisfactory, children's progress does not accelerate as quickly as in other parts of the school, particularly in Year 6 where rapid progress is made. Trends have been rising in Key Stage 2, as a result of setting and reaching challenging targets. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 in 2004 and 2005, standards reached the national average in English, mathematics and science. Children with learning difficulties make good progress. More able children achieve well enough in English and

mathematics but do not fulfil their potential in science. This is largely because insufficient attention is given to developing their skills of investigation. Boys often begin school with lower attainment than girls. However, because the curriculum has been adapted, their achievement overtakes that of girls. Children achieve well in physical education and reach high standards in art and design.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. The impact of the school's motto 'happy learning promotes success' is reflected in their good attitudes and exemplary behaviour. They work well independently and together. Children are polite, friendly and very proud of their new school. Attendance is satisfactory and improving, and there have been no exclusions. Children's fragile self-esteem on entering school is nurtured carefully and good relationships with staff increase their self-confidence. Their consideration and respect for others is evident in the very low incidence of bullying. Children learn to make informed choices and begin to understand how people work together for the community. This is because their views are valued and acted upon. For example, members of the school council are involved in the appointment of teachers. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They develop respect for different faiths and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Their enjoyment in learning is reflected in the beautiful art displays. The school is rightly planning to involve children in improving the local environment to increase their contribution to the wider community. Children have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe. Opportunities to participate in local enterprise schemes are helping to secure their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good, consistently so in Reception and in Years 1, 2 and 6. In these classes, teachers have very high expectations and children strive to meet the demands placed upon them. There are examples of outstanding teaching in Year 6. In one lesson the teacher's enthusiasm and meticulous organisation of resources stimulated children to write with flourish and imagination, such as 'he brandished his sword in the glazed moonlight'. In Years 3, 4 and 5 teaching is satisfactory but there is not the same insistence on high quality, accurate and well-presented work. This is why children's learning does not move on as quickly in these classes. All teachers manage children very well. Consequently, lessons are calm and purposeful and children are very clear about what they are expected to learn. New ideas are well explained, often using computer projections. This makes learning visual and easier for children to understand. The use of assessment is good and has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Assessments are fully taken into account in English and mathematics to ensure that the work provided is well matched to children's

different learning needs. However, in science, the links between assessment and lesson planning could be better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that meets statutory requirements. Children enjoy learning because of the many practical activities and the rich diversity of after school experiences. The curriculum has been carefully constructed to broaden children's experiences and develop their creativity. These improvements are reflected in Activemark, Artsmark Silver, Healthy Schools, Young Enterprise and Achievement awards gained. The impact has resulted in the improved achievement of boys, good progress in physical education and exemplary work in art. The school is largely successful in catering for children's different needs. The requirements of children with learning difficulties are well understood and well supported. Additional provision is made for the gifted and talented children through links with the local high school. However, their needs are not sufficiently met in science, particularly with regard to investigation skills. A strong thread of personal, social and health education runs through the school, which ensures that children understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, staying safe and preparing for the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Guidance and support are good. Parents are justifiably appreciative of the excellent level of care provided. Trusting relationships with adults in school ensure that children always have someone to confide in. Robust child protection and health and safety procedures, backed up by thorough risk assessments, ensure children's safety and well-being. The most vulnerable children and those who find learning difficult are very well supported. Well-established links with outside agencies ensure that they are safeguarded and able to achieve as well as they can. Many children have very weak social and communication skills when they start school. Therefore close attention is given to ensure that they settle quickly. Arrangements for children's transfer to high school are good. Children's academic and personal development is carefully monitored. Target setting is well established and guides children towards higher achievement. Although teachers mark children's work conscientiously, there is some inconsistency in the junior classes in communicating just what children need to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's enthusiastic leadership and clear direction is reflected in the rising standards. An effective team approach underpins a determination to improve the quality of education and ensure that children are safely protected. Good management ensured that children's learning was not adversely affected at the time of the fire. Although standards fell temporarily, swift action to

remedy the situation resulted in improvements, even before moving into the new school. The role and skills of subject leaders have strengthened since the previous inspection. Checking the work of the school is now a good feature. Assessments are analysed, lessons are observed and children's work examined. This provides a clear picture of how well the school is performing. Planning for the future is good, not least because staff, governors, parents and children are all involved. The areas requiring attention are converted into key priorities in the school improvement plan and tied to teachers' performance management objectives. This ensures that the whole school pulls together to make changes. Good financial management is evident in the way fire insurance reserves are being targeted towards improvements. In the wake of targeting specific areas, children's writing is improving and achievement is beginning to increase in Key Stage 2. The school is fully committed to including and meeting the needs of all children. However, there is more to do before the more able children achieve as well as they can in science. Governors challenge and support the school well and meet all legal requirements. The school's improvement since the previous inspection and its capacity for further improvement is good.

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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>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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 your help when we inspected your school. You are correct in believing that your school is a good one. The things we particularly liked were:

- the way the headteacher and staff are constantly trying to improve the school
- the good teaching that helps you to learn successfully
- your interest and enthusiasm for learning and your excellent behaviour
- the excellent care provided to ensure that you are safe and looked after
- the way teachers plan the curriculum to make your lessons interesting.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to make your school even better by:

- helping those of you in Years 3, 4 and 5 to make progress that is equally as good as it is in other classes
- helping you to improve your investigation skills in science. We think this will help all of you but encourage the more able children, particularly, to reach higher standards.