



Highfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119204
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280489
Inspection dates 12 December 2005 to 13 December 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Wright Street
School category	Community		Chorley
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Lancashire, PR6 0SP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01257 262783
Number on roll	237	Fax number	01257 231819
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Justin Bentley
Date of previous inspection	1 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Sue Cornall

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 12 December 2005 - 13 December 2005	Inspection number 280489
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized primary school is situated close to Chorley town centre. It serves an area of some social and economic disadvantage, seen in the higher than average number of pupils who receive free school meals. There is a broad social mix of families and most pupils live close to the school. In recent years, the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased, mostly of Pakistani heritage. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is just above average and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is high. When pupils start school, their attainment is below what is typical for their age. The school has faced considerable disruption and high staff turnover during the last four years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education. This confirms the school's own view of its effectiveness. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and progress well. Standards, overall, have risen in recent years and most pupils reach the expected standards by the time they leave the school. Inspectors found that personal development and the way the school cares for pupils are good. The headteacher gives good leadership and is a driving force for improvement. Partnerships with outside agencies and the local children's centre are used well. Governance is good, and governors know the school well. Parents are happy with the school and pupils say lessons are fun. Pupils say bullying is not tolerated and are confident that any problems are resolved very quickly. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and pupils say they enjoy all activities the school provides. Attendance is below the national average. Previous weaknesses have been overcome although standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) still need further improvement. The school has implemented a range of rigorous strategies to achieve this, and to strengthen the relatively new staff team. Good management appointments, strong input from the governing body and improvements to the building have equipped the school with a good basis for further improvement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

not applicable

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue the drive to raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Consolidate and strengthen the quality of teaching to ensure all teaching is consistently good.
- Develop the systems to improve attendance and punctuality.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school accurately judges achievement and standards to be satisfactory. Children start school with below average attainment. Good teaching and well-planned activities ensure they make good progress, but only a few reach or exceed the goals expected at the end of reception. Pupils continue to make good progress and by age 7 standards match the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. For the older pupils, achievement is satisfactory. Despite the high staff turnover, standards have gradually improved since 2003 and most pupils reach the expected standards in English, mathematics and science by age 11. The 2005 targets in all subjects were exceeded. Pupils performed particularly well in English and results were well above average at the higher level.

Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress through carefully planned learning activities and well informed support from the teaching assistants. Pupils who

speaking English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress, and the school provides bi-lingual assistance when needed. Girls, who have not performed as well as boys in mathematics and science, are being given extra help. Standards in ICT are just below expected levels, but have improved since the previous inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. They are proud of their school and make the most of all it offers, work hard in lessons and love taking part in events such as drama productions and entertaining the elderly. They enjoy opportunities to take responsibility. The prefects take their duties seriously and are making a difference to the welfare of all pupils. Behaviour, in classrooms and around the school, is nearly always good. Bullying is not tolerated and staff quickly and consistently deal with any small incidents. Pupils mix well, help each other and have trusting relationships with all the adults in the school. Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise, and know how to stay safe. The school is preparing pupils for the future satisfactorily.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Teachers help pupils to consider different opinions and religions and make sensible decisions. Pupils enjoy the well-chosen novels that help them understand other children's dilemmas and cultures. Attendance is below average, mainly due to the number of pupils who arrive late each morning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree that teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many teachers are new to the school, particularly in the older classes, where staff turnover has caused some disruption to learning. Some good teaching was seen in all key stages during the inspection. All teachers carefully explain to pupils what they will learn in each lesson and review this with them afterwards. Good subject knowledge, planning and lively teaching enabled pupils to make good progress in one literacy lesson. Knowledgeable assessments of pupils ensured they achieved well in a mathematics lesson. In most lessons, pupils have positive attitudes and are keen to learn. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good, and well focussed adult interventions ensure that children enjoy their learning and make good progress. Pupils have individual and group targets but these, and the new tracking systems, are in the early stages of implementation. Pupils appreciate teachers' written comments on their work although marking is not used consistently enough to show pupils how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree that the school provides a satisfactory curriculum which is balanced and broad. Better curriculum planning introduced since the previous inspection means that pupils build up their knowledge and skills from year to year. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills competently in other subjects, for example, to report science investigations. Considerable improvements have been made in ICT provision and pupils have suitable opportunities to use ICT in all subjects. The Foundation Stage provides a good range of practical and purposeful learning activities, and the children also enjoy learning in the new outdoor area each day. The school offers a limited range of clubs outside lessons, mainly for older pupils. They enjoy attending football and badminton, and are looking forward to a planned residential visit. To enrich their learning experiences, the school has taken pupils to the theatre, a town centre store and the local library. Pupils recently enjoyed performing at a local old peoples' home and distributing harvest gifts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are cared for, guided and supported well. Staff know their pupils well, ensure they are all fully included in all activities and are very committed to their welfare. The school is building some very good practice, for example, creating a secure, sensitive atmosphere in personal, social and health education lessons. Pupils say they feel safe and can talk to staff easily. Pupils with special needs and those who require help in a lesson are well supported. Child protection procedures are fully in place and understood by all staff. Risk assessments are thorough and the recent Health and Safety audit recommendations were immediately implemented. Parents are very happy with the school's good induction procedures, which include home visits. Children settle quickly in school because they receive a caring and friendly welcome. Good links with local secondary schools involve pupils with their next school. The new tracking system, with individual and group targets, informs teachers about exactly how their pupils are progressing. As yet the information is not used to full effect to raise achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Inspectors confirm the school's view that leadership and management is satisfactory overall. The headteacher demonstrates good, skilful leadership. She quickly united all staff, governors and pupils through her strong, clear vision for school improvement. She is supported well by the deputy headteacher and by the senior leadership team. Parents' views of the school are very positive and they feel the school gives their children a good education. The Foundation Stage is led and managed well, so children make good progress in the safe, friendly environment. Most subject leaders are new to their role and provide satisfactory leadership. With good guidance and support from the head and deputy, they are beginning to contribute to the drive to raise standards.

Good governance, much improved since the previous inspection, makes a strong impact on the work of the school. Governors are well-informed, help to plan for improvement, and challenge decisions confidently yet supportively. Appropriate performance management procedures are fully in place for all staff. The headteacher has introduced rigorous systems to evaluate the school's performance, which are becoming effective in the drive to raise standards and achievement. The budget is carefully allocated and monitored, and all resources are used well. The school gives satisfactory value for money. It is well placed for further improvement.

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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?	3	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	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	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?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	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?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	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	3	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

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Highfield Primary School
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14 December 2005

Dear Children

As you know, three inspectors visited your school this week. You all made us very welcome, and were always polite and friendly when you talked to us. We are glad you enjoy coming to school. We would like you to know the main things we found out.

You have a good headteacher who is working hard with you, the staff and the governors to improve your school.

You behave well and work hard. You help and care for each other and we know you enjoy learning because the teachers make lessons interesting and fun.

Your school has good arrangements to care for you and make sure you are safe and happy in school.

We have asked your teachers to look at the following things to make school and your progress better:

to find ways of helping you improve in English, mathematics, science and ICT

to strengthen their teaching and share the things they do well

to work with your parents to make sure you all come to school every day, and arrive in good time each morning.

Thank you for all your help with the inspection. We hope you will continue working hard to help make your school an exciting and happy place to learn.

Yours sincerely

Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector