



# Harrop Fold School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 133351  
**LEA** Salford  
**Inspection number** 282988  
**Inspection dates** 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Jane Jones HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Hilton Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Worsley
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16		Manchester, Lancashire M28 0SY
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 7905022
<b>Number on roll</b>	1062	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 7904426
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr B Pennington
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 May 2003	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Antony Edkins

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<b>Age group</b> 11 to 16	<b>Inspection dates</b> 7 December 2005 - 8 December 2005	<b>Inspection number</b> 282988
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Harrop Fold School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls aged 11 to 16 years. It was formed in 2001 following the amalgamation of two secondary schools, about a mile apart, and still occupies the two sites. There are 1,062 students on roll which is about 200 fewer than at the time of the previous inspection, but this fall reflects local trends. When the school was inspected in May 2003, it was found to require special measures because it provided a very poor standard of education. Since then, its progress has been monitored on a regular basis by HMI.

The school is situated in the mainly residential areas of Worsley and Little Hulton which experience significant levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of students eligible for free school meals is more than double the national average. Few students are from minority ethnic groups. Students enter the school having achieved results at primary school that were below average overall, particularly in English. An average proportion have been identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 20 students have a statement of special educational need.

There have been many staffing changes since May 2003, including the membership of the senior leadership team. The executive headteacher has been in post since September 2004. Over half of the staff have joined the school within the last two years. The school previously had difficulty in recruiting suitably qualified teachers, but is now fully staffed. A School Improvement Partnership Board (SIPB) was established in July 2004 to help the school make more rapid improvement.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Harrop Fold School provides a satisfactory education for its students: this judgement matches the school's view. The headteacher's outstanding leadership has transformed the school into a place where students and staff want to be. He is well supported by senior and middle managers, and all are united around raising standards. Day-to-day management is good: the school operates smoothly. The school deploys its resources efficiently. The school's self-evaluation is of high calibre and based on accurate management information. Operational and strategic planning are effective. There is good capacity to improve further.

Standards are below average. General certificate of secondary education (GCSE) results improved a little in 2005, when nearly all students achieved at least one A\* to G grade. Results in national tests at Key Stage 3 in 2005 were similar to the previous year. While many students are now making satisfactory progress, a legacy of underachievement remains from earlier weaknesses in the education provided by the school. Teaching and learning have improved significantly and are satisfactory with a core of good practice. The school is in the early stages of developing a more exciting and relevant curriculum.

Students' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Behaviour has improved markedly over the last year and is now good. Most students have positive attitudes and enjoy coming to school, although attendance remains too low despite improving significantly this year. Students' views are heard and acted upon: this is a strong feature of the school. The school is effective in safeguarding students, particularly those who are vulnerable. Students benefit from the school's partnerships with external agencies and local organisations.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement.
- Make more of the teaching good or outstanding so that learning becomes exciting and challenging.
- Build on recent work to develop a curriculum that meets students' needs and aspirations.
- Improve attendance.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school that students' current level of achievement is satisfactory, and is significantly stronger than that represented by examination results over the last few years.

The students' performance in the 2004 national Key Stage 3 tests in English, mathematics and science were below average overall. At GCSE and general national vocational qualification (GNVQ), the proportions gaining five A\* to C and five A\* to G grades were well below average. At both key stages, too many students made inadequate progress in relation to their starting points. The provisional results for 2005 were broadly similar at Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, the proportion gaining at least one A\* to G grade improved significantly while the other measures remained steady. Overall, girls tend to do better than boys in examinations.

Standards as shown in lessons, samples of work, and teachers' records are improving. The school's data indicate that it is on track to achieve its targets in 2006. Students are making at least satisfactory progress, including those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This improved performance stems from the school's rigorous action to improve teaching and the students' more positive attitudes to learning. In addition, the introduction of robust target-setting procedures means that the school is able to track students' progress and give support where it is most effective. Teachers' expectations of what students might achieve have risen and students are increasingly focused on how well they are doing. There remains, however, a legacy of underachievement among older students in particular, resulting from previous weaknesses in provision. Nevertheless, many students are starting to make up ground that was lost during their earlier years in the school.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The school judges students' personal development and well-being to be satisfactory; inspectors agree.

The majority of students enjoy their learning. They say: 'we enjoy our lessons now because more of us want to learn' and 'The Cyber Caf, is brilliant'. Overall, attitudes to learning are satisfactory. Most students are keen to learn and determined to succeed, as evidenced by the work of the seven 'Chefs' in Year 11 who have been given apprenticeships. Behaviour is good; a very significant improvement since the last inspection. Many students welcomed inspectors and were eager to tell them just how much their school had improved over the last year. Students whose behaviour is challenging are well supported by an excellent anger-management programme that builds their confidence and self-esteem. Exclusions are declining rapidly. Bullying rarely occurs and when it does students say they know who to speak to and 'it gets sorted out'. Attendance is well below average, but has risen significantly over the last year because of effective strategies implemented by the school. Recent innovative curriculum development in Key Stage 4 has had a dramatic effect on improving the attendance of some students.

Students' views are heard and acted upon; this lies at the heart of the rapid and recent improvements within the school. There is a vibrant school council through which students are involved in shaping school policy about behaviour. Moral development is good; students are encouraged to make the right choices and to learn from their mistakes and move on. Social and cultural development are good, including the raising

of awareness of cultural diversity. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Personal development is strengthened by additional work in film-making, undertaken after school with a professional practitioner. The school is rightly proud of 'Peter's Story', a film gaining national recognition following its showing at the Salford Film Festival.

The school successfully promotes healthy lifestyles and emotional well-being. Students are encouraged to eat healthy food and take physical exercise. The school listens and responds to concerns raised by the school council about health and safety; for example, it recently refined and improved its programme on sex education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The school judges all aspects of the quality of provision to be satisfactory. Inspectors agree, except for the quality of care, guidance and support which inspectors find to be good.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Almost all the lessons were at least satisfactory and there was a core of good and outstanding practice. This represents a significant improvement over the last year and is a result of the school's thorough arrangements for monitoring and support, its determination to attract teachers of quality to the school, and its imaginative use of valuable support from the local authority and external consultants.

The school makes good use of advanced skills teachers and coaching methods to bring about improvements in teaching. This said, there is not yet enough good teaching to ensure students make consistently good progress. There are a few lessons, mainly in Years 10 and 11, where the quality of learning lags behind the teaching, in part reflecting the catch-up that these students still have to do.

Teachers' practice has become more consistent, particularly in the quality of lesson planning which is good overall. Laptop computers and digital projectors are used effectively. In the best lessons, the teachers move up a gear as the students achieve, so that students are continuously challenged and learn at a rapid rate. They work hard and are expected to think for themselves. Not a moment is wasted. Increasingly, teachers question students to check and extend their learning and also invite them to ask questions. However, some weaknesses remain, including lack of pace, too much 'teacher talk', and low expectations of students' capabilities.

The school's arrangements for teachers' continuing professional development are concentrating on appropriate areas. For instance, a systematic approach has recently been adopted to improving the quality of marking. Some marking made it clear to students how they could do better, but this quality was not consistent across all subjects. The school is also developing improved procedures to assess students' progress. Challenging targets are set for students in Years 9 to 11, and there are rigorous systems to track progress and identify students in danger of underachieving. This is followed by focused support to help them catch up.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school offers a satisfactory and improving curriculum. There are now better arrangements for transition into Year 7 and more choice for students in Year 10. All students in Key Stage 4 have the opportunity to experience the world of work in one form or another, including through the sport and leisure progression award. Recent changes have fired up students' enthusiasm and have had a positive impact on attendance and there have been almost no exclusions in the upper school. Provision of information and communication technology has improved greatly. Teachers are increasingly using it to plan lessons, produce resources, and to deliver more interesting lessons.

Rapid progress from a low base has been made in meeting the needs of students who have learning difficulties. The school has identified this as a key area for development.

The school is well aware of the need to develop a broader range of extracurricular activities and other opportunities to enrich students' learning and personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The good care of students begins before they join the school in Year 7. Students who might struggle to cope emotionally or academically with the demands of secondary school are taught separately for much of the time. Many have flourished in this supportive environment, improving their attendance and behaviour. Here and elsewhere in the school, teaching and support staff work well together for the good of students. Effective steps have been taken to deal with bullying which, once intimidating for some, is now resolved through mediation by learning mentors. Partnership with external agencies is effective and supports vulnerable students well.

Robust systems are in place for child protection, and also for the health and safety of students. The school is developing guidance for students about their choices for the next stage of life, through written information and meetings, and working with Connexions and local colleges.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors judge that leadership and management are good overall. The transformation in the school over the last four terms has been remarkable, and there is strong capacity for further improvement. The school's assessment that leadership and management are satisfactory is too modest a view given the degree and rate of change. A positive ethos for learning has been established.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership, described as inspirational by many staff. He leads by example and is highly visible around the sites. He is an excellent role

model and a very strong advocate for the students. Day-to-day management is good: the school operates smoothly. The headteacher's relentless determination and commitment to improving the quality of education provided by the school have won him the support and loyalty of students, parents, staff and governors. He has united the school, and there is a strong and shared focus on raising standards. A deep understanding of school improvement underpins his work and the clear direction that he provides.

The headteacher communicates his high expectations of all in the school's community very clearly. A key characteristic of his successful leadership has been the combination of energetic support and challenge he provides. Managers spoke of being empowered to lead their areas but are confident that help is readily available if required. A strong team approach is emerging. Staff are now willing to engage with strategies for improvement and reflect constructively on their practice and on feedback they receive. This change in outlook has been crucial: there is now a culture of professional dialogue in the school. However, where necessary, the headteacher has challenged robustly performance that was not good enough.

The quality of senior and middle-level leadership and management varies but much is good. They share the headteacher's vision of high standards, and understand their individual roles and responsibilities well, while also appreciating the big picture. Senior managers have become good at evaluating the impact of actions taken but some are better than others in using this information to drive the next phase. The school knows itself well; self-evaluation is of a very high calibre and is securely rooted in evidence. Planning for improvement is effective at operational and at longer-term strategic levels.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have remained consistently committed to the school and are now better informed about its strengths and weaknesses. Appropriate committee structures enable governors to carry out their duties and support the school in its development. Financial management has improved significantly: the recovery plan for the budget deficit is on track. Resources are used effectively and efficiently; value for money is satisfactory. The most is being made of the accommodation to create an attractive learning environment, but having two sites is a continual drain on resources and a challenging constraint to whole-school developments. A new school building on one site is planned for 2008.

The school has benefited from the substantial input of the School Improvement Partnership Board (SIPB), whose role is due to continue for at least 18 months more. The project manager has provided particularly valuable support to the headteacher, especially in relation to financial management and her current work on assessment. The quality of support from the local authority has improved significantly and in recent months has been well tailored to the school's requirements. In particular, the principal school improvement officer has provided valuable training for staff. The local authority is committed to working in close collaboration with the school in the future.



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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>	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	NA	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>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	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	3	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2	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	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	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

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

I am writing to tell you about the findings of our inspection but, first of all, I would like to thank you for welcoming us to Harrop Fold. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, seeing your work, and hearing your views and experiences of school.

You will know that I have visited your school several times over the last two years to check how well it was doing. You told us how much better the school has become. We agree! We found that the school has improved so much that it no longer needs special measures. So, well done to you all!

Here are some of the things we liked best about your school.

- Your behaviour has improved a lot - it is now good. You get on well with each other and with staff, both in lessons and around the school sites.
- You take responsibilities, like being a school councillor, seriously. You say what you think very clearly, and this has helped the headteacher, staff and governors improve the school.
- The staff take good care of you, which makes you feel safe, and you know who to talk to if you were to have a problem.
- You want to learn and try hard in lessons, especially when your teachers give you interesting and challenging things to do.
- The headteacher is excellent at leading the school. You are right to be proud of him, and he is just as proud of you.

We have asked Mr Edkins, staff and governors to do the following things to improve your school further.

- Help you gain better results in tests and examinations.
- Continue to improve lessons so that they are exciting and challenge you to think hard.
- Design good combinations of subjects for you to study.

Something you can improve for yourselves is your attendance. Many of you miss several days a term, even though you enjoy coming to school.

I am sure that you will continue to play an important part in helping Harrop Fold go from strength to strength. I look forward to hearing about your future successes.