

Heald Place Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105422
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	287223
Inspection date	11 July 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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 on roll	
School	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Guhathakurta
Headteacher	Mrs R Martin
Date of previous school inspection	9 December 2002
School address	Heald Place Rusholme Manchester M14 7PN
Telephone number	0161 2247079
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Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This much larger than average primary school serves a diverse population in an area that has high levels of social and economic disadvantage. Large numbers of pupils move in and out of the school during the year. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is close to four times the national average. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, with most at the early stages of learning English. The main first languages are Somali, Urdu and Bengali. Over a third have refugee or asylum seeker status. An average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Healthy School; Eco School; Inclusion - gold standard; and a Leading Aspect Award for the school's English as an additional language provision.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The school correctly judges that it provides an outstanding education for its pupils and it gives excellent value for money. Parents from all the many and varied groupings are very satisfied with the progress their children make and the education they receive. This is because the school is very effective in meeting its most distinctive aim 'to make every child a confident learner', despite the various and complex barriers to learning faced by many of the pupils.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the overall excellence of the teaching, the curriculum and care, guidance and support. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and they feel safe and secure. As a result, attendance and punctuality have improved significantly. Pupils are proud of the school and what it has to offer them as individuals. They make a superb contribution to the running of the school through the variety of pupils' groups, including the school council. Behaviour is very good and, where inappropriate activity does occur, the school is very quick and decisive in its actions. Pupils very clearly understand the need to lead healthy and safe lifestyles and they are supported in this by the school's strong links with a range of outside agencies.

The school's population is constantly changing, with many pupils arriving and leaving throughout the year and in all year groups. Often, pupils arrive at the school with skills and understanding that are very poor. The majority of children who enter Nursery have very low levels of skills, particularly in communication, knowledge and understanding of the world, and coping socially and emotionally. The stimulating and welcoming environment of the Foundation Stage helps them to settle quickly and acquire the necessary skills well. Throughout the school, pupils in all groups make at least good progress and often better. Compared to the national picture, standards are significantly below average in the Year 2 national tests, but results at Year 6 are getting nearer to average scores. As a result, progress from Year 2 to Year 6 in the 2005 and 2006 national tests was significantly better than the norm, and is a strengthening picture. The strength of pupils' achievement ranks the school in the top 15% of schools nationally in 2006. Given the range of barriers to learning, pupils' achievement is excellent. On account of this and pupils' strong attitudes to learning, it is no surprise that pupils feel that they are well prepared for the future. They talk about moving confidently to their secondary school.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Consequently, the school continues to challenge itself, to cope admirably with the constantly changing population and to improve what the school offers. At the heart of this is inspirational and rigorous leadership by the headteacher and senior team. They know the school, the families and the community exceptionally well. They recognise shortcomings early, carefully plan for improvement and follow up initiatives with detailed checks. Management values the contribution made by everyone and not least that of the pupils. As a result, there is exceptional teamwork. The school is never complacent because the senior team and highly effective governing body readily accept that how well the pupils do and what the school provides can, and must, always be improved. Consequently, the school is very well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children in the Foundation Stage progress well. Nevertheless, by the end of Reception, these children do not meet expectations for their age because of their very low starting points. Skills in communication, language and literacy remain particularly low because many are still learning English. Progress continues to be good in Years 1 and 2 and a good basis is laid there for future learning and a brisker rate of progress. Standards are significantly below average at the end of Year 2 because literacy skills remain relatively weak. Higher-attaining pupils do better in reading and mathematics. The school's rigorous approach to the teaching and learning of letter sounds is paying dividends for all. Girls are doing better than boys, particularly in writing. The school has recognised the need for improvement here and the curriculum has been modified to give pupils more opportunities to write. The evidence in books is that standards are rising. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6. Again, the school has been active and rigorous in motivating pupils to reach better standards in writing. The successful approach has centred on increasing pupils' motivation, particularly through using drama and film images to develop experience and the quality of speaking and listening. There has also been an increasingly rigorous approach to the marking of pupils' work, so that they have a clear view of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

All pupils are progressing significantly better than expected, including pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Some pupils who were below average in Year 2 achieve average, and occasionally above average, scores in Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They are open and friendly and know the difference between right and wrong. Consequently, behaviour shows an improving picture that owes much to the highly effective collaboration between the school and outside agencies. Similar comments can be made about the improvements in attendance, which is now satisfactory and significantly better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have a very strong understanding of the diverse nature of British society and they benefit from the ways the school celebrates the rich diversity in its own community.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school: they and their parents say so very clearly. Pupils mix harmoniously. They move around a potentially difficult building sensitively and play safely. Pupils understand very well the benefit of developing a healthy lifestyle and their knowledge is enhanced by appropriate links with external professionals, such as the school nurse. The school has received an award for this work. 'Buddies', councillors and members of a variety of other groups make excellent contributions to the life of the school. These opportunities, their excellent attitudes and their developing academic skills are preparing them very well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The high quality of teaching and learning makes an excellent contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. This is because teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, make learning fun and enjoyable, and ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further. The development of strong basic skills is of paramount importance and the effective involvement of support staff promotes this very well. Teachers' planning caters effectively for pupils' differing needs and interests. School priorities, such as improving writing, are engaged in an imaginative way. In an outstanding Year 5 lesson, pupils researched and identified the most persuasive evidence to set before an appropriately dressed 'judge', so that a defendant could receive a fair trial. All of the pupils had a task to do in their group, including one who recorded evidence on a laptop.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum promotes academic and personal development exceptionally well. Consequently, basic literacy, numeracy and social skills are consistently improved upon. Work in all of the subjects is effectively used to develop and practise basic writing, numeracy and information and communication technology skills. Provision for the various groups is very well prepared and targeted. Excellent modifications are made to programmes of work to improve provision for particular groups, such as innovative strategies to improve boys' interest and skills in writing. Very good curriculum enrichment means that there are opportunities that bring colour and vitality to learning, such as the very wide use of cultural artefacts, residential and local visits and visitors with a vivid story to tell. Collaboration with partners and services, such as museums, libraries and Manchester Grammar School, provide excellent opportunities for pupils to broaden their aspirations, particularly the gifted and talented.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents are satisfied that the school provides exceptional care for their children and recognise that this extends to families. They find the school to be welcoming, approachable and 'listening'. As a result of rigorous monitoring and subsequent activity, attendance, punctuality and behaviour have all improved. Excellent links with outside agencies are important in this work. The school follows up issues; this was illustrated by the view of one parent: 'I was very satisfied when the school very quickly sorted out a bullying problem and clearly continued to monitor the situation.' Procedures for the safeguarding and protection of pupils are robust and meet requirements. Procedures for the identification of, and support for, vulnerable pupils are extensive and ensure that these pupils feel included and valued. Consequently, they have strong self-esteem. A very important part of this is the excellent assessment and tracking of pupils' academic and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The school is led by an excellent headteacher who has created a rigorous and challenging learning environment within a calm and supportive ethos. The vision for the school is shared by staff, governors and pupils and is much appreciated by parents, who come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds. As a result, pupils are confident learners and some make exceptional progress because of the well thought out and well planned provision for them. This is amply illustrated in the outstanding leadership and management of inclusion. There is a very strong ethos of inclusion in the school which equally supports pastoral and academic provision. Senior colleagues provide very strong support, expertise and energy. Governance is highly effective and rightly focused on pupils' achievements. For example, governors keep a close check on pupils who join the school mid year. School improvement planning accurately identifies the right priorities and the school monitors outcomes carefully.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I thoroughly enjoyed being in your excellent school this week. I am most grateful for your warm welcome, your courtesy and the help you provided.

Here is what I really liked about your school.

- The happy atmosphere in the school and the confidence you develop.
- The support and satisfaction expressed by your parents.
- The way that behaviour and attendance have improved.
- The way you enjoy your lessons.
- The excellent teaching and the strong teamwork that puts your needs first.
- The good progress that you make, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Your excellent attitudes to work and the relationships you develop.
- The way that you all contribute to a safe and caring ethos in the school.
- The outstanding and interesting range of activities that enrich your curriculum.
- The excellent leadership and management, including the contribution of the school council and other pupil groups.

You are fortunate that your teachers recognise that they need to continue improving the school and they want to make sure that you learn even more and make even more progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. You can really help by continuing to follow the advice and guidance from your teachers.

Good luck for the future and continue to look after each other.