



The Heys Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106201
Local Authority Tameside
Inspection number 287441
Inspection dates 13–14 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Whiteacre Road
School category	Community		Ashton-under-Lyne
Age range of pupils	3–11		Tameside OL6 9NS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 3301847
Number on roll (school)	232	Fax number	0161 3393243
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Jane-Ann Birkitt
		Headteacher	Mr Adam Stevens
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	13–14 November 2006	287441

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Heys Primary School is of average size. Most pupils come from an area where social disadvantage is higher than average. Pupil information shows above average figures in relation to the proportion entitled to free school meals, the proportion from minority ethnic groups, the proportion whose first language is not English and the proportion with statements of special educational need. In addition, the school has a much higher proportion of pupils than usual who do not start their primary education in the school. The overall proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school is spearheading a local authority initiative to give children with moderate learning difficulties opportunities to learn in mainstream schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

The Heys provides an outstanding level of education. Pupils make exceptional progress both academically and in their personal development in a very safe and extremely caring setting.

The school works in highly challenging circumstances, with, for example, many pupils from backgrounds where English is not the first language and others from abroad or only staying a short time. There are an above average number of vulnerable pupils. Despite the complexities of these challenges, pupils leave Year 6 with average standards overall, and above average in mathematics and science. Results in English are not as high because of limitations in the pupils' writing. The basis for pupils' impressive progress is established in the Foundation Stage. Children enter this stage with low standards, notably in language and communication. However, the excellent range of learning activities secures improvements in speaking, listening and concentration. Pupils still start Year 1 with below expected standards but they are eager to learn. They continue to improve and gain average standards at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6 pupils have enormous zest, reflecting their immense contributions to life in school. They are ready for the next stage of their education, as one parent confirmed by saying, 'I am so happy that my son has a place in this school. It will set him up for the rest of his life.' The pupils revel in their life at school and respond to the many enthusing activities, including those which help them to learn about healthy living, with total commitment. The pupils thrive because they know they are valued. 'We know we can make a difference [in the school]. The teachers and headteacher listen' typically represents their views. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the work of the school and give it a huge vote of confidence. They feel a strong sense of partnership.

At the heart of the school's improvement is the exceptional leadership of the headteacher. During his tenure he has led significant improvements in the way the school works and the outcomes that are achieved. His colleagues are determined to meet his extremely high expectations and this leads to excellent teaching and care.

The school has excellent capacity for improvement. It has dealt emphatically with issues from the previous inspection. Innovative and extremely courageous self-evaluation systems, which include governors and outside partners, identify where it can still improve. The school's self-analysis was extremely accurate although its grades underestimated just how highly effective it is.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of pupils' writing so that overall standards in English move closer to those gained in mathematics and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding for all learners and pupils overcome a complex range of challenging barriers to learning. They consistently reach much higher standards than might be expected by the end of Year 6, given their starting points. For example, one third are from backgrounds where English is not the first language, a quarter of the pupils do not start their education in the school and the proportion with statements of special educational need is above average. The organisation of provision in the Foundation Stage is excellent. This helps pupils improve their speaking, listening and concentration, so while they start Year 1 with below expected standards, they have built a solid platform for subsequent progress. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are average in reading, writing and mathematics, this being typical of results in recent years. In Year 6 overall standards are average in English and above average in mathematics and science. This mirrors test results in 2006 when a remarkable two thirds gained the higher Level 5 in science and half did so in mathematics. Despite very good progress in speaking and reading, standards in written English are understandably not as high, reflecting the pupils' lack of range in written expression.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils leave Year 6 extremely well prepared for the next stage of their lives. Their extraordinary personal development, including first-rate spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is overwhelmingly clear in all school activities. Pupils' love of school is palpable. Enthralled and highly focused in lessons, they eagerly join discussions and never stop enthusing about their achievements. Their excellent behaviour creates a safe, harmonious school where pupils from different backgrounds learn and play contentedly. Foundation Stage children happily leave their parents or carers to tackle learning activities without adult prompting. Pupils thrive on their many responsibilities such as being peer mediators, (interview and reference required). They passionately explain how they help to settle differences and their responsibilities for the school's Eco garden, including their tireless recycling activities. The school council is a powerful force for change, spearheading, for example, the provision of lockers for all and healthy meals. Pupils are enthusiastic about healthy lifestyles and proud of their Healthy School award, although not every lunch-box reflects these principles. The pupils' love of school is not fully reflected in their attendance, which is satisfactory - usually because of extended holidays - but improving. Punctuality is excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Lesson and curriculum planning are excellent, resulting in lessons that effectively take the full range of attainments and backgrounds in a class into account. A rich diet of engaging learning activities and resources captures the pupils' enthusiasm and stimulates their learning. Pupils are also motivated by the teachers' clear enthusiasm, be it for the fascination of mathematics or the rhythm of a poem. There is a sense of occasion in many lessons as pupils apply themselves industriously to tasks they clearly enjoy, such as Year 3 pupils recording their own Second World War public information broadcasts. Pupils are challenged because so much is expected of them. This is especially apparent in probing questioning that consolidates and extends learning. Highly skilled support staff are fully involved providers of help and guidance. As one pupil observed, 'There is always someone to help.' Marking is very specific and teachers track progress in English and mathematics very closely. Review sessions such as those at 'carpet time' effectively help pupils to be more secure in evaluating and improving their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

This is a vibrant and happy school. A major reason is the exceptionally exciting and energising range of curriculum opportunities that make a major contribution to the pupils' personal and academic progress. The thirst for continuous improvement drives curriculum planning. It brings success, evident in the transformed science results. Innovative thinking is apparent in the 'Big Write' initiative to improve writing. Pupils relish creative cross-curriculum topics such as their study of the Second World War. The successful learning through fun regime of the Foundation Stage is now being successfully introduced to Years 1 and 2. The school enriches pupils' experience through the use of outside practitioners such as sports coaches and modern foreign language specialists. Beyond the classroom there is a rich menu of popular educational trips, theatre visits and other activities, often enjoyed by parents and carers as well as pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are exceptional, enabling all pupils to thrive personally and academically. Arrangements for child protection, health, safety and risk assessment are securely in place. Pupils' excellent relationships with adults make them feel very safe. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties is first-rate. Difficulties are quickly spotted through the close attentiveness of staff. Very strong links with outside support services lead to extremely careful and effective assessment of pupils' needs. Learning mentors and support staff provide excellent support, including bilingual help. Thorough recording and assessment, systems ensure that teachers effectively advise

pupils and parents about progress and how to improve. The school is robustly systematic in tackling areas needing improvement, such as limiting extended holidays abroad when pupils should be in school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

One parent observed that the headteacher is 'amazing'. This phrase typifies the highest admiration consistently expressed by parents, governors and pupils for the headteacher's leadership. It is seen as a key factor in the transformation in the school's effectiveness. His passionate commitment to excellence for all pupils makes very high demands of staff. All respond with full commitment. The headteacher's very open style of leadership carries colleagues with him, encourages them to be innovative, and gives them support, guidance and training to help them succeed. Consequently, senior and middle leaders are equipped to provide genuine leadership that improves curriculum and teaching. Self-evaluation is excellent. The headteacher and his colleagues analyse data rigorously to compare the school's outcomes against robust expectations. Lesson observations are systematic and rigorous. A remarkably innovative self-evaluation day opens the school to outside scrutiny from partner headteachers, local authority staff and governors. The day's findings feed into the school's improvement planning. Governors are fully engaged in the life of the school and provide a searching examination of policy. Extremely secure financial management enables the school to use its funding to best effect, evident in the school's outstanding learning environment.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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	1
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	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

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	1
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.

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

Thank you for the welcome you gave us during our visit. We liked talking with you. You helped us find out a lot. We soon got to know how much you really enjoy life at school and how proud of it you are. So, you will be pleased to know that we agree with you. We think that your school is outstanding. Here are some of the best things.

- You make excellent progress in your learning. You do really well in mathematics and science.
- Your behaviour is excellent. You all take very good care of each other.
- You all do a lot to make life even better at school, such as working in the Eco-garden, being play leaders, or serving on the school council.
- Your teachers are excellent. They make sure you have very enjoyable lessons that help you learn very well. Those who need extra help get plenty.
- The school takes extremely good care of you.
- You have lots of exciting things to do such as trips and other activities which are good fun and help you to learn.
- The way the school is run and organised is excellent.

We have asked your teachers to improve the following and we are sure you will want to help them do this.

- Help you to improve the quality of your writing so you can do as well in English as you do in mathematics and science.

You are right to be so very proud of your school. Good luck for the future.