



Orrell Holgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 106409
Local Authority Wigan
Inspection number 287506
Inspection date 2 November 2006
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 address	Moor Road
School category	Community		Orrell, Wigan
Age range of pupils	4-11		Lancashire WN5 8SJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01942 776670
Number on roll (school)	209	Fax number	01942 776671
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mike Barnes
		Headteacher	Mr Mike Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves mainly White British pupils and a few from other minority ethnic backgrounds. The area has little social and economic disadvantage and the entitlement to free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Very small proportions of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school has received the Active Mark Gold awards, Leading Aspect Award for 'Developing Learning Capacity through Partnership and Collaboration' and provides a range of additional extended learning school services for the local community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it provides a good standard of education. One happy parent put it this way: 'Holgate is a wonderful school where all staff help the children reach their full potential.' Pupils' well-being, personal development and academic achievement are good. They enjoy school very much and, as a result, behaviour is exemplary and attendance is consistently above average. Pupils benefit from good care and support and they are very clear that they are safe and secure in school. The school is working towards achieving 'Healthy School' status and discussions with pupils illustrate that they are very aware of the need to eat healthily and exercise. Pupils' achievement and progress are good and this sets them up well for future learning and life beyond school. Standards on entry to school are broadly average. The strongest area is personal, social and emotional skills and the weaker area is communication, language and literacy. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception) where it is clear from the school's good assessment and record keeping that the majority of children progress well and reach the expected goals. By the end of Year 2, standards have been above average for several years. Standards in reading and mathematics are better than writing, particularly for the more able pupils. There has been a track record of high standards at the end of Year 6, particularly in mathematics and science where progress is very good. A key factor in this level of progress has been the strong development of pupils' investigative and problem-solving skills. English standards have not been as good since 2004, mainly because the quality of writing is only adequate. There are two significant factors in this: first, inconsistent target-setting and marking are not challenging enough; second, there is not enough writing done in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. This is in sharp contrast to the good development of numeracy skills in other subjects. None of these identified outcomes for the pupils would be possible without good provision by the school. Teaching and learning are effective. The school uses teachers' specialist knowledge and understanding well in Years 3 to 6, particularly in mathematics and science. These strengths are reflected in the helpful and effective feedback that staff receive from management monitoring. Pupils' good academic and personal development and the strong provision are the result of effective leadership and management. All in the school make a strong contribution to its smooth running. An example of really important input made by pupils relates to the assistance they provide at play and lunchtimes for the member of staff on first aid duty. Leadership of the school is strong and ambitious and, as a result, there is a strong track record in national tests over several years. Since the last inspection, weaknesses in the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have been improved. The school continues to serve its community well and provide good value for money. Consequently, the school enjoys the support of a hardworking governing body and of parents, and is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.

- Make individual pupils' target-setting and marking to the targets more consistent across the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Across the school, significant strengths are the very good standards in mathematics and science. Good progress and standards in art were observed around school. In Reception, the early reading skills are much stronger than the writing. Even the less able children meet the Early Learning Goals in some areas of learning, such as knowledge and understanding of the world and creative and physical development. By the end of Year 2, standards reached by boys are below those of the girls, but their achievement is equivalent as they make similar progress but from lower starting points. By the end of Year 6, provisional results of the 2006 national tests show high achievement in mathematics and science, but an adequate picture in English. There is no significant difference in the standards of boys and girls. Achievement is better in speaking, listening and reading than in writing because the main focus has been to improve reading. However, there are examples of good quality writing by some pupils in Key Stage 2. The school's careful checking of pupils' progress shows that the few from minority ethnic groups achieve well, as do the very few pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are good. Excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour are the norm. Pupils insist that bullying is very rare and the few instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and fairly. Pupils say that staff provide them with good role-models. As a result, they feel safe and secure and know that there is always someone to talk to if the need arises. Pupils contribute well to the school and local community, for example, through the work of the class councils. Pupils raise funds for charities. Pupils have a very strong and cheery understanding of the need for safe play, regular exercise and healthy eating. Strong academic and social skills ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Typically, the relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful and this means that pupils live up to high expectations of behaviour and work. Staff have good subject knowledge and understanding and pupils work with a clear sense of purpose

as the aims of their lessons are clearly explained. Lessons are planned well and proper consideration is given to the differing needs of pupils with the full the range of ability. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils, clarifying discussions and helping them make good use of resources. Pupils' work is regularly marked, strengths are highlighted, but there is some inconsistent practice across the school, particularly in writing. As a result, marking does not point out frequently enough how well pupils are meeting their individual targets and what could be improved. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Pupils with extra needs, such as the very few learning English as an additional language and those identified as gifted and talented are also provided for well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Learning is stimulating, well-planned and enriched by a very good range of out-of-school activities, visits and visitors. Good provision is made for the development of numeracy and there is plenty of evidence that number skills are used in other subjects, such as geography and science. A particular strength is the very strong development of investigative and problem-solving skills in mathematics and science. It is no accident that results in these subjects are consistently high and that many pupils achieve higher than average standards. Pupils use their reading skills well and this has been a particular focus for the school. Writing skills are not used so widely and this has had an influence on writing results being lower than reading. Provision for ICT is good, having improved substantially since the previous inspection. The school has a highly skilled and enthusiastic approach to the creative elements of the curriculum, such as art and music. The quality of artwork around the school and the great interest of the pupils reflect the school's success in these important and enriching areas.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils' welfare and safety are well managed, for instance, an exhaustive record is compiled about staff. The governing body has robust procedures to ensure the environment is safe. Pupils make a smooth and happy transition to and from school because of the good liaison with a range of outside agencies and the work of all in the school. As one satisfied parent wrote: ' My child has only been at Holgate a short time, however during that period the school has made a real effort to integrate her, through buddy systems and helpers from other ages.' Academic guidance is satisfactory. It is strongest in reading, mathematics, science and art and has lead to better achievement and standards. This is not so well developed in writing where, for example, the quality and use of learning targets and marking is inconsistent across the school and leads to just satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong leadership and benefits from the good support of key staff. The school has a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. These are shown in its good self-evaluation and development plans. These plans have a particularly effective tool for moving the school forward in the clear success criteria that are measurable. The school sees the need to improve writing standards but recognises the work is incomplete. It correctly acknowledges that in order to raise pupils' writing performance, the good work done in speaking, listening and reading should be applied to pupils' written work. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is managed well, as is that for children in Reception. Governors carry out their duties effectively. They benefit from wide ranging expertise and good information from the school on its work. Finances are managed well and governors play a sound part in strategic planning but they have too strong a reliance on the information from the staff rather than the outcomes of their own monitoring and evaluation. The good work of the range of committees is promoting the role of 'critical friend'.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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 really enjoyed being in your good school this week. It was a privilege to work with you and the staff of the school, even for such a short time. Nevertheless, I learned a lot about your school and this letter will give you an idea of my main findings. I was very impressed by the courtesy and help you all provided and particular thanks are due to those who talked with me.

What I really liked about your school:

- the standards you reach, particularly in reading, mathematics, science and art
- the good progress made by all children, including those with extra needs and talents
- your very keen enjoyment of school, excellent behaviour and kind help for others
- the good teaching
- the interesting work that your teachers have planned for you
- the good care that adults show for you all
- the important contribution that you make to the running of the school and the wider community
- the good leadership and management that has ensured that the school has continued to serve your community well.

You are all working hard to write well, but there needs to be more opportunities for you to use and develop your developing writing skills across all the subjects that you do. I have also asked your teachers to make sure that your individual writing targets are clearly displayed in your books and that their marking tells you how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve further. You can help your teachers by:

- always doing your best writing in all your subjects
- working very hard to reach challenging targets, acting on your teachers' guidance and trying to improve on your previous work.

Good luck for the future and accept my best wishes.