

Accrington Huncoat Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119182
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	291346
Inspection dates	9–10 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter McKay

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	183
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Joan Hayselden
Headteacher	Mr Paul David Price
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Lynwood Road Huncoat Accrington Lancashire BB5 6LR
Telephone number	01254 233369
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools nationally. It is located in an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. The numbers on roll have fallen in recent years but are now rising as new privately owned housing estates develop in the locality. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is above average. There are small numbers of children from a Traveller background and looked after children. The number of minority ethnic children is very low. On entry, children's attainment is below average for their age. The number of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs is above average but overall the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with national figures. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual time of transfer is above average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Huncoat is a satisfactory and improving school, with strengths in pastoral care, pupils' personal development, and teaching and curriculum in the Foundation Stage. The school's aim is to establish a happy, caring learning environment. In this, it is successful. Most parents are happy to send their children to a school that they feel is welcoming, supportive and successful in developing pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. In 2006, it was named as one of the 100 most improved schools for Key Stage 2 results for the last three years.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. Most children start in the Nursery with attainment below what is typical for their age. They make good progress so that they reach nationally expected standards in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. In personal, social and emotional development their standards are above expectations.

In Years 1 to 6 standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory, except for some of the most able who do not achieve as well as they should. In Years 1 and 2, standards have been rising slowly towards the national average. Despite a sharp dip in 2006, the school's assessment of the current Year 2 indicates that results in 2007 are likely to return to the level of those found nationally. Test results for Year 6 pupils have been improving faster than those nationally and in 2006 were broadly in line with the national average. The school's developing system for checking pupils' progress indicates that results are likely to be similar for the present Year 6. In both key stages, too few pupils are attaining the higher levels.

Pupils develop well as individuals. Their behaviour is generally good and they enjoy learning, although this varies according to the quality of teaching. They have a sensible understanding of how to lead a safe and healthy lifestyle. They are playing an increasingly effective role in influencing the school's development, especially through the school council, but their contribution to the wider community is less well developed. With their improving academic skills they are soundly prepared for the future. Attendance is close to the national average and is improving in response to some imaginative initiatives.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, though good lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Too often, teachers do not use their good knowledge of pupils' progress to set work that fully meets the needs of all, particularly for some more able pupils. Good relationships between staff and pupils underpin effective management of pupils' behaviour and help create a good climate for learning. The curriculum is satisfactory and enriched well by themed weeks and after-school activities. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good because it is firmly based on learning through first-hand experiences. Pupils are well cared for and say they feel safe in school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The headteacher has steered the school through a period of falling rolls and staffing difficulties. Satisfactory progress has been made in tackling the issues raised in the last inspection. Staff outside the senior leadership team are beginning to assume wider responsibilities, giving the headteacher the opportunity to take a more strategic role. The trend of rising standards and the self-evaluation of performance indicate senior leaders have a satisfactory capacity to improve. The tracking and use of information about pupils' progress is at an early stage; the school does not enable some of the more able pupils to achieve as well as they should and does not evaluate its improvement well enough in terms of pupils' progress and the standards they achieve.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the achievement of more able pupils throughout the school in English, mathematics and science.
- Increase the frequency with which pupils' progress is tracked and monitored to identify potential underachievement.
- Develop a more accurate view of the school's performance by evaluating its actions in terms of their impact on standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average. Progress through the Nursery and Reception classes is good and children mostly reach all the goals expected of them when they enter Year 1.

Standards attained by Year 2 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics have risen to the national average over recent years but dropped sharply in 2006, particularly in reading. The school attributes this to high pupil mobility and to some overemphasis on writing at the expense of reading. The school has sought parental support for reading, and this is helping to raise standards. In all subjects, too few pupils attained the higher levels. Standards in the current Year 2 are average, but the numbers likely to reach the higher levels are still too low.

The results achieved by Year 6 pupils in 2006 meant that statutory targets were met. The number reaching the higher level in science was below average. Standards in the present Year 6 are average. Inspection evidence indicates that whilst the high level of pupil mobility may affect the progress of individual pupils, it has no significant impact on results overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a happy community and pupils enjoy their education. Pupils are correct when they say the school is a friendly and safe place to learn. Warm and caring relationships mean that pupils know who to approach if they need help. Instances of bullying and racial harassment are extremely rare and pupils say that they are dealt with effectively by staff. Most pupils are confident that others value their opinions. This was evident in assembly when pupils could express their concerns knowing they would be supported by other pupils. Behaviour is good and pupils collaborate well in lessons and play together harmoniously. Pupils enjoy physical education, especially swimming, and appreciate the importance of a sensible diet and healthy lifestyle. Close links exist with the local and wider community. Pupils recognise they have a role to play in helping others and do this by raising considerable funds for charity. Members of the school council learn to represent others and are proud of the improvements they have made to the school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. School rules are clearly displayed and have a positive effect on social and moral development. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors. Attendance is now in line with national figures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and some lessons are good. Most lessons are well organised and teachers explain to pupils what they are to learn and how it will build on what they have done before. Pupils with additional learning needs, and the most vulnerable, receive sensitive support from well deployed classroom assistants so they participate fully in all aspects of the lesson. Relationships are good and almost all pupils are responsive, eager to learn and hardworking. Teachers know their pupils well, but are more successful in promoting the learning of middle and lower-attaining pupils than that of the more able. Some of these pupils do not reach the higher levels because their work is insufficiently challenging and demanding. Work is marked regularly but does not always provide clear guidance as to how well the pupil is doing and what is needed to improve further. Overall, teaching is satisfactory because there is not enough to excite and enthuse pupils. In some lessons, the pace is slow and pupils are expected to learn mainly by listening to their teachers and tasks are uninteresting. In the Foundation Stage, children make good progress precisely because they are active in learning through experience; this good practice is now emerging in Key Stage 1.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Personal and social development is a strong aspect of the curriculum and leads to a calm and orderly school, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The curriculum is well balanced to sustain pupils' interest in learning. Good quality work on display shows good attention to creative subjects and includes a range of interesting themes that add richness to the curriculum. Careful planning ensures that pupils in the mixed-age classes do not repeat or miss any aspects of the National Curriculum. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and others requiring extra help with learning to speak English are well supported and have full access to the curriculum. The school is at an early stage of identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils. Similarly, the needs of the more able pupils are not always fully met. The curriculum is enhanced through a satisfactory range of after-school activities, particularly in physical education, that contributes well to pupils' appreciation of keeping fit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and is stronger than the academic guidance given to pupils. Good attention is given to pupils' well-being and parents are happy that their children are looked after well in school. Safeguarding procedures are in place. The school checks carefully on the background and suitability of all adults working in school. Good links exist with external agents and this is especially beneficial for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the Traveller children and those identified as more vulnerable.

Systems to monitor and advise pupils about their academic progress are satisfactory. The school accurately assesses pupils' progress and uses this information well to identify and provide for most pupils who may be starting to fall behind; this system does not work so well for more able pupils. Class displays include targets showing pupils what they need to do to improve, but these

are not regularly highlighted and, in practice, pupils are at an early stage of checking on their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's commitment to a caring approach creates the positive atmosphere that pupils and parents appreciate. The school's promotion of inclusion works well in the case of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, it is only satisfactory for the more able pupils, who are not always given hard enough work. Self-evaluation and development planning are satisfactory. However, the improvement in results has led the school to judge itself too generously in some respects. The development plan compiles the right priorities for improvement, but monitoring is not yet sufficiently sharp and analytical to specify actions, which can then be evaluated for their impact on achievement and standards. The system for tracking pupils' progress does not yet provide sufficiently up-to-date information to be really effective. In the absence of a permanent subject leader, development of the system to include science has not taken place.

Subject leaders have received intensive support from the local authority and consequently feel more confident in self-evaluation and supporting other staff. They are beginning to use the outcomes of lesson observations and work scrutiny to inform action plans. However, whilst there has been some success in eliminating weaker teaching, this monitoring is not yet sufficiently rigorous to identify those aspects of teaching most in need of improvement across the school. Governors have a well informed view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are prepared to take decisive action to bring about improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

11 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Accrington Huncoat Primary School, Lancashire, BB5 6LR

Thank you for being so polite and helpful when my colleague Mrs Platt and I visited your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out so much valuable information about the school. You and your parents say that the school is a welcoming and caring community, which helps you to become responsible and confident people. We agree with you and your parents. We were pleased to hear that you find the school an enjoyable and safe place to be and that adults are always ready to listen to you and help with any problems. You behave well and get along with each other and with adults. It is important that you feel able to talk about your own thoughts and opinions, knowing that others will listen to and respect them.

After seeing some of your lessons and looking at your work, we feel that your teachers and support staff help you to make satisfactory progress in your work. This means you are doing as well as expected. We would like you to work as hard as you can in lessons, attend regularly and in particular take every opportunity to practise your reading. We think your teachers could help by being a bit more adventurous in planning lessons, which would be really exciting and make your learning more interesting.

We also looked at what the school might do to improve. We would like your teachers to provide more challenging and demanding work for the more able pupils so that they can do as well as they possibly can. We have also asked the school to check your progress more often, to find out and let you know how well you are doing. Finally, we think everything the school does should be aimed at helping you to make good progress and to develop as young people.

We wish every one of you well for the future and hope that you will always work hard and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Peter McKay

Lead inspector