

# Old Hall Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105294
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	308822
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	178
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr B Rostron
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr A Cookson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2003
<b>School address</b>	Springside View Bury Lancashire BL8 4LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 761 2051
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 761 2051

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves an area of broadly average social and economic circumstances. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is near the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is slightly above the national average. The school was awarded the national Healthy Schools Award in summer 2007.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with an outstanding Foundation Stage. It gives good value for money. The headteacher, very ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides the school with a sharp focus on standards, which is improving pupils' achievement. Parents value the education the school provides for their children. They are particularly pleased with the caring and supportive role the school provides. 'My children enjoy coming to school. I am happy knowing that the school looks after them well. I think they are making good progress in their learning from year to year', was a typical comment.

Pupils progress successfully and achieve well as they move up through the school because teaching is purposeful. Standards, which were broadly average by the end of Year 6 in 2006, are rising because recently the school has introduced very rigorous assessment and target-setting procedures. These are enabling the school to match teaching and support more accurately to pupils' needs. The early impact of these measures can be seen in the significantly improved Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 results in 2007. Only in writing, especially in Key Stage 1 where standards are not yet high enough, has the impact yet to be felt.

Personal development and well-being are positive aspects. Pupils are happy in school and most enjoy their lessons. They particularly enjoy lessons in which they are involved and active and here they learn best. Their enjoyment can be seen in above average attendance levels and their happy faces around school. Pupils behave well. They are courteous to each other and to adults. They know how important it is to eat healthy foods and take exercise. It is a pleasure to see how considerately and safely they play at break times. 'We have to be careful for the sake of the younger ones so we don't run into them and hurt them,' said one older pupil. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take on positions of responsibility by becoming prefects and playground monitors, for example. The school council meets regularly and has brought about improvements to playground facilities by providing playground seating and a range of play equipment. Pupils develop into self-confident and inquisitive youngsters by the time they leave school. These qualities are preparing them well to take advantage of the next stages in their education.

The school's recent investment in information and communication technology (ICT) equipment is enabling teachers to add extra variety and relevance to lessons. Teachers are making very effective use of the improved assessment and target-setting procedures to inform their planning and match work more closely to pupils' needs. This is playing a key part in improving pupils' learning and achievement, which are both good. Teaching and learning are supported by a good curriculum which is broad and balanced. The curriculum is largely subject based, but there are examples of good practice in linking subjects in a more thematic approach. Where this is the case, pupils are encouraged to be even more actively involved in their learning and respond with even higher levels of enjoyment and learning. This approach is not yet used systematically enough across the school, however.

Senior leaders are providing the school with a clear focus on improving standards and achievement. Strong teamwork is promoted to that end. The school's record of good improvement since the last inspection, together with its ability to realistically appraise its current position, places it in a good position to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

The Reception class provides children with an outstanding start to their schooling.

It is led and managed exceedingly well to ensure that it provides a stimulating and nurturing environment. Transition arrangements are excellent ensuring that children settle in quickly and confidently. Parents are involved closely in preparing the children for school. They are kept fully informed about their children's progress. Children start in the Reception class with skills which are below those expected for their age. They make excellent progress to reach standards which are consistently in line with expected levels. Such rapid progress is brought about by first-rate teaching and a curriculum which provides an excellent range of appropriate activities.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Build on the good examples in Key Stage 2 to develop links between subjects to add to pupils' enjoyment and learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Standards are broadly average or above and achievement is good across the school. The introduction of rigorous assessment procedures and target-setting is starting to have a positive impact. In 2005 and 2006, standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were mainly average. In 2007, unpublished results reveal noticeable improvements. For example, at the end of Year 2 standards in mathematics and reading rose. This improvement was not matched in writing, however, where standards are not yet as high as they could be. Furthermore, at the end of Year 6 results were better than in the two previous years. In science standards rose very sharply and pupils achieved outstandingly well. What is more, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieved well because of the good support they receive.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of pupils' spiritual, moral and social education is good. It is supported by a good programme for personal, social and health education. Assemblies are used particularly well to give pupils opportunities for reflection. Strong Christian values underpin the school's work and give the pupils a good sense of right and wrong. They realise the importance of respect for each other and adults. The school is working hard to develop pupils' appreciation of other religions and cultures through religious education and displays, for example. Pupils say they feel safe in school and value the input of safety talks and demonstrations from organisations such as 'Crucial Crew'. Pupils enjoy making a contribution to their local community. For example, they are strongly committed to a local 'Porch' charity supporting homeless people in the locality.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teachers have high expectations of pupils who respond with positive attitudes to learning. Relationships are strong. Pupils work well together and support each other. Long-term planning

of lessons is good. Very effective assessment produces group and individual targets, which the school rightly celebrates as its most effective tool in raising standards. The use of information from assessment is very effective in deploying the teaching assistant in Key Stage 2. As a result, support is provided where it is most needed and to best effect. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use it well to ask questions which make pupils think. When teaching and learning are at their best, lessons have a clear purpose. Checks that pupils have achieved their objectives reveal the progress made and what still has to be accomplished. However, this is not the case in every lesson. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and their written comments are consistently clear and helpful.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets pupils' needs. It is taught mostly by using a subject approach. However, examples of good practice are emerging where greater links are established between different subjects. These strategies add extra layers of variety, enjoyment and effectiveness to pupils' learning experiences. Provision for literacy is improving. For numeracy it is already good. Provision for science and ICT has improved significantly following recent additions to resources and equipment. This is enabling pupils to make good progress in these areas. Provision is enriched through the teaching of Spanish in Key Stage 2, much to pupils' appreciation. This adds to their enjoyment and cultural awareness. A wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities helps pupils appreciate the importance of leading healthy lifestyles. Trips out, including a residential for older pupils, help raise levels of confidence and self-esteem in preparation for pupils' later lives.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good. Policies and procedures for protecting children are in place as are those for health and safety. However, staff training in these areas is overdue. Adults know the pupils well as individuals and treat them respectfully. School leaders are effective in removing barriers to learning. For example, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and effective support is provided to ensure that they make good progress. The school has established effective links with outside agencies to support pupils where necessary. Good links with local high schools mean that pupils are confident about moving on after Year 6. Support and guidance for pupils' academic development have improved with the introduction of rigorous assessment and target-setting procedures. Pupils now know more clearly what are they capable of achieving and what they need to do to reach their goals.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides effective leadership with a good focus on raising standards and achievement. Thorough procedures for self-evaluation involve a wide range of stakeholders. They give leaders and managers an accurate view of the school's effectiveness enabling them to identify accurately areas for improvement. For example, assessment and target setting have been improved with great success. Subject coordinators and middle managers carry out their responsibilities enthusiastically and knowledgeably, but there is more to do in terms of managing improvements in writing and creating links between

subjects. Senior leaders support them in their work and hold them to account responsibly. Leaders and managers monitor teaching and learning effectively and regularly. The outcomes are used to identify professional development needs related to improving teaching and learning. Leaders and managers have forged good links with the local community. The school is regarded positively by parents and the community it serves. Governors carry out their duties conscientiously. They are very supportive of the school and question its work and effectiveness appropriately.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

Inspection of Old Hall Primary School, Bury, BL8 4LU

You may remember that a colleague and I visited your school recently to check on what it is like and how well all the staff are helping you to learn. Thank you for being so polite and friendly. We really enjoyed talking to you. You will be pleased to know that we think you go to a good school.

The things that we think are good about it are:

- the youngest children in Reception have an excellent start to their school life
- your teachers are now tracking your progress well to help you learn even better than before
- you behave well and are positive about learning
- all the people in school care for you and help you in all you do
- the school offers so much to help you grow into responsible and likeable youngsters by the time you leave.

We have asked your teachers to improve two things to make the school even better.

- We want them to help you improve your writing, especially in Years 1 and 2.
- We want your teachers to add even more enjoyment to your learning by being consistent in the way they link different subjects together in topic work.

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you will keep on enjoying school and doing well. Most of all, we hope that you will carry on helping the staff to make your school an even better place to learn!

With best wishes for the future.