

Higher Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105302
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308826
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jenny Brewin
Headteacher	Mrs V Eustice
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Egerton Road Whitefield Manchester Lancashire M45 7EX
Telephone number	0161 7662005
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. Pupils come from a range of homes in the local area which has seen some decline in social and economic advantages in recent years. The majority of them are from a White British background and only a handful speaks a language other than English at home. Very few of the pupils are at early stages of learning English and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below that found nationally. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average, although the numbers in individual classes fluctuate year-on-year. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that expected of children of similar age. The school provides extended care facilities for pupils before and after school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the school is good and the outcomes of its provision for pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

The school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere which encourages children from their earliest days in school to learn and play happily together. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding because they love coming to school and find lessons exciting and interesting. Teachers and support staff have excellent relationships with the pupils, gaining their confidence through sensitive support, good humour and plenty of praise. This means they learn that it is perfectly acceptable to make mistakes or admit to finding work difficult. Help is always at hand and pupils know this.

Pupils' standards and achievement are good. Attainment on entry is typical of four-year-olds. Quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are good. Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 6, standards are above average. Standards and progress in mathematics are particularly good throughout the school due to good teaching and support strategies. In writing, progress is less rapid because pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their skills. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the early stages of speaking English make the same good progress as their classmates.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to engage pupils of all ability levels in their learning. They make good use of resources, often drawing on their own individual interests and experiences to make lessons relevant and fun. The school has effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and teachers regularly mark written work. Marking is regular but the advice given to pupils on their next steps in learning and how they can reach higher standards is not consistently good across the school.

The school cares for its pupils well. Pupils say that bullying is 'at the top of the headteacher's 'no' list,' and that the infrequent incidents are dealt with swiftly and effectively. They know how to keep themselves safe and benefit from an enviable range of sporting activities which encourage them to lead healthy lifestyles and add to their enjoyment of school. Pupils moving on to their next phase in education are well-supported in the transition as a result of the school's good links with the local high school.

Leadership and management of the school are good. School leaders and managers at all levels know the school's priorities for improvement and work as a strong and enthusiastic team to raise standards in pupils' academic and personal development. They share the headteacher's firm belief that 'only the best will do' for all pupils in the school. Parents appreciate this and speak highly of the quality of education that the school provides. Without doubt, this is an effective school with good capacity to improve and which gives good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age, although communication and language skills and knowledge and understanding of the world are the weaker areas. They make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching is good. By the time they leave Reception the vast majority of children are working at the expected levels and some children exceed these. Progress is particularly good in communication, language and

literacy because new initiatives, such as a more focused approach to spelling and more opportunities to develop reading skills, are having a positive impact.

The Foundation Stage unit is well resourced and children are provided with a varied range of practical activities which engage their interest and develop their skills well. The outdoor area is a good improvement since the last inspection, but is not used enough throughout the day to extend the children's learning experiences. The unit provides a bright, attractive learning environment where children feel safe and secure. Relationships are very good: children work and play well together and have very good attitudes to their learning. Good induction systems ensure that children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Links with parents are good and they are encouraged to support their children in their learning.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work well as a team and they are keenly aware of how young children learn. Progress is assessed regularly and planned activities take into account the children's individual needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing.
- Use information from assessment and tracking procedures to make pupils aware of the next steps in their learning and how to succeed in reaching their individual targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start school with the levels of development expected for their age and reach standards which are consistently above the national average by the time they move on to the next phase of their education at the end of Year 6. This demonstrates good progress.

Standards in mathematics are higher than those in English and science because of particularly good teaching in this subject. Pupils' standards in writing are not as good as they are in reading and mathematics throughout the school because they do not have enough opportunities to write in other areas of the curriculum. The school has worked hard to raise standards in science by increasing the amount of time pupils spend on practical work and the impact of this is seen in their improved progress and obvious enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well-supported and make good progress from their individual starting points. Similarly, the small number of pupils who are in the early stages of speaking English achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They talk enthusiastically about their school and say that they, 'would not change a thing!' Most think that learning is interesting and fun and particularly enjoy the practical activities such as mathematics games, science experiments and information and communication technology. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. They show very good levels of care for each other and play-leaders enjoy the responsibility of looking after younger ones at lunch-times and play-times. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and this, together with their very good attitudes to learning, contributes well to the good academic progress they make and to their above average attendance.

Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe, fit and healthy. Playtime snacks, healthy lunch options and the exceptionally good range of sporting activities contribute very well to this. The school council is actively involved in decision making and is proud that, after writing to the local council, the school has been provided with compost bins for the gardening club. Singing at the Manchester Evening News Arena and organising fund-raising events for charity effectively enhance their understanding of the wider community. Pupils leave the school as mature and confident individuals with personal and academic skills that prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned and activities build effectively upon pupils' prior learning. For example, ability groupings in English and mathematics throughout the school make it easier for teachers to tailor the work precisely to meet pupils' needs. Teachers and classroom assistants work very closely together to encourage pupils to think for themselves, share ideas and cooperate when working in groups. Good use is made of all available resources, including interactive whiteboards, to make lessons exciting, to reinforce learning and maintain pupils' interest. However, in some subjects, such as history and science, there is an over reliance upon worksheets and this limits the opportunities for pupils to write at length. Pupils are enthusiastic partners in their learning. They are mature, behave extremely well and relate well to their peers and their teachers. The school continues to explore ways of using staff expertise in particular subjects to benefit as many pupils as possible. For example, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are currently making good progress in music because they are being taught by skilled musicians and this contributes considerably to their enjoyment of school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets external requirements and builds effectively on pupils' prior standards. The school ensures that basic skills are given appropriate emphasis. Personal, social and health education is good in all years and epitomizes the caring ethos of the school. Equally, the philosophy that every child matters is strongly threaded throughout the curriculum. Pupils have good opportunities to talk about their work and to learn through listening to each other and to visitors to the school. Visits away from school such as to the Science Museum give pupils first-hand experiences of the local and wider community and make learning more relevant. A residential visit is included for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and pupils look forward to it eagerly. Additionally, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities especially of a sporting nature, which are well supported by the pupils, adding to their understanding and enjoyment of the work done in class. The curriculum provides specialist lessons in music and sport and these considerably enhance pupils' physical and cultural development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are very well cared for in a happy, supportive learning environment. The vast majority of parents and pupils agree with this. Pupils feel safe and secure. Relationships are excellent and pupils know they can talk over any worries or concerns with an adult. Systems for

safeguarding pupils' health, safety and well-being are securely in place and meet current requirements.

The good provision for those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the more vulnerable and the small number for whom English is not their first language ensures that they are fully included in all that the school has to offer. Pupils' progress is regularly monitored and information is used to identify those pupils needing extra support or challenge. However, target-setting and written comments on pupils work are not consistently used throughout the school and this means that pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is led and managed well. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher gives the school a continuous drive towards improvement. She has built up a strong senior leadership team, with clear roles and responsibilities, who work effectively to raise standards and achievement for all groups of learners. This school does not rest on the laurels of its former successes. School leaders have high expectations of work and behaviour and support colleagues in refining and developing their good teaching skills. Subject leaders have full responsibility for their individual subject areas and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. They have clear action plans for improvement and regularly check for the impact of these on pupils' academic and personal development. This means that the quality of the school's self-evaluation is good, giving a clear picture of its strengths and accurately identifying the overall priorities for improvement. However, pupils are not always given enough guidance on how they can improve their own individual performance. Strong links with the local high school and other outside agencies support pupils and their families. Governors are well-informed and can challenge leaders to account for the school's performance. They support them in effective financial management and efficient deployment of staff and resources.

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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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
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 Higher Lane Primary School, Whitefield M45 7EX

Thank you all so much for making Mrs Davenport, Mr Calderbank and me feel so very welcome in your school. You were really polite and helpful and we were particularly pleased to see how well you behave and really care for one another. You are a real credit to your school and Mrs Eustice and the rest of the teachers are very proud of you.

We think you have a good school. Your teachers are all very kind and helpful. They make your lessons interesting and give you lots of exciting activities to help you learn. Most of you work hard and this means that you do really well. We were particularly impressed with your good work in numeracy. We also liked the way in which you keep fit and healthy by taking part in lots of physical education and sports.

We have asked your teachers to help you do even better in writing and also to make sure you know the next steps in your learning and how to reach them. We are asking you to help them by continuing to work hard and follow their instructions.

We really hope you all enjoy the next few weeks before Christmas and have fun taking part in all the activities and sharing these with your friends and families. Good luck for the future.