

Hollins Grundy Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105314
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308830
Inspection dates	12–13 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Jim Crouch

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	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sylvia Mason
Headteacher	Mr Simon Waddington
Date of previous school inspection	9 June 2003
School address	The Hags Off Hollins Lane Bury Lancashire BL9 8AY
Telephone number	0161 7960476
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a residential suburb of Bury. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well below the national average as is the proportion at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. A very small number of pupils are looked after in public care. The school holds the National Healthy School Award and the Activemark Award.

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 which provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. In the words of one parent, 'My son has had an excellent standard of education and more importantly he has had a happy experience of school life'.

Pupils make good progress in their lessons because teachers make their lessons enjoyable and interesting. Since his appointment in 2005, the headteacher has led a reorganisation of the management of the school which has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and the standards attained by pupils. There is a common sense of purpose about the school with teachers, support staff and pupils all keen to play their part. A committed and well informed governing body gives the school good support. Pupils are keen to talk to visitors. They say that they are very well looked after and always know who to turn to when they need help.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good around the school and very good in lessons, with older pupils taking a very conscientious attitude towards their work. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities through such roles as play leaders and librarians and have been able to contribute to school improvement, particularly through the work of the school council. They show good community awareness as illustrated by their work to improve the local environment and the many fundraising activities that they hold in support of a local charity.

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. When they join the Reception class their skills in some areas of learning are below those expected for their age. As a result of good teaching that meets the needs of individuals, they enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. By the end of Year 6, standards are significantly above average. This is especially so in English. Despite this good performance, the more able pupils are not attaining the higher levels in writing at both Key Stages 1 and 2 because they are not given sufficient opportunities to extend their writing skills through other subjects, such as science and mathematics.

Teachers are confident and make good use of their interactive whiteboards and other resources to engage pupils and make lessons meaningful. Pupils always know what is expected of them and excellent relationships in lessons mean that they are confident and keen to contribute to their own learning. However, links between subjects are not always made clear so opportunities are missed to help pupils make better sense of their learning. Teachers set challenging targets. They monitor pupils' work very well and give clear guidance on what needs to be done next in order to make good progress. The good use of individual education plans and the effective deployment of teaching assistants mean that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Well established links with outside agencies make a significant contribution to the school's outstanding care of pupils, and the excellent support it provides for vulnerable pupils. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enriched by a good range of after school activities so that pupils enjoy their education and achieve well. However, there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills in subjects across the curriculum.

The school's self-evaluation is purposeful and used well to plan for improvement. All staff and governors are involved in the process and this had led to improved staff confidence and understanding of how to raise standards. The way in which the school has successfully dealt with the issues identified in its last inspection report and the extent to which standards have

improved, demonstrates a significant strength in leadership and a good capacity to improve. The school provides good value for money because accommodation, staffing and other resources are used well to enable pupils to make good progress.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start in Reception their attainment in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is below expectations. Their personal development is broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and soon become confident learners who respond well to classroom routines and show respect for others. Children enjoy choosing activities and play happily with one another. They make good gains in language and mathematical development as well as in other areas of learning so that by the end of Reception they are meeting the standards expected for their age. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of children, and continually encourage them to talk about what they are doing in order to improve language and thinking skills. Teachers plan classroom activities well to ensure that they offer enough challenge and scope for children to secure their skills. Assessment is rigorous and enables teachers to build well on children's earlier learning. The school acknowledges that planning and provision for outdoor learning is not as effective as it should be because the restricted space prevents a free flow of activity between classroom and the outside area. There are good relationships with parents who speak highly of the care provided and the progress their children make. The school encourages parents to share in the education of the children by providing support, for example in helping children to read. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. Work has begun to introduce good Foundation Stage practice into Key Stage 1 in order to improve the transition between classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more planned opportunities in subjects across the curriculum to enable pupils to reach higher levels in literacy and numeracy.
- Plan better links between subjects to improve pupils' understanding of what they are learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From attainment which is below national expectations when they enter the Reception class, pupils make good progress and as a result standards are above average when pupils leave school at the end of Year 6. In recent years, weaknesses in the transition from the Foundation Stage and some underachievement of boys have resulted in pupils making only satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. The school is already having some success in dealing with this and standards are rising. A concerted effort to raise standards of literacy and numeracy meant that results were well above average in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 2 in 2006 and, despite a dip in the science results, above average overall in 2007. The school's detailed analysis of its results for 2007 enabled it to highlight, for example, the good performance of boys in mathematics at Key Stage 1, and identify areas for further improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time at school. They talk confidently about what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. The popularity of the sporting after school clubs and the healthy food chosen by the pupils at

lunchtime indicate that they are putting theory into practice. Pupils are aware of what to do to keep safe. They show good awareness of the needs of others and are making good progress in learning about other cultures through activities such as the annual art week. The school council provides pupils with the opportunity to express their views and to contribute to the life of the school, for example by operating the school's 'Buddy Bus Stop' scheme and managing charity fundraising activities. Attendance and punctuality are broadly in line with the national average. The school has had some success in bringing about improvements and is working closely with the parents of the small number of pupils whose progress is being hampered by their poor attendance and punctuality. Pupils are making good progress in developing the skills they will need for their future economic well-being. For example, senior pupils are expected to apply in writing for posts of responsibility and do so with confidence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers' good subject knowledge helps them to plan lessons well. Resources, particularly interactive whiteboards, are used effectively to bring lessons to life. In a mathematics lesson, for example, pupils enjoyed guessing the shape as it emerged slowly on to the screen and were able to identify its features more easily. Learning was particularly effective in a lesson where the teacher linked ideas from mythology to aspects of personal development which in turn led to purposeful research on computers. There is good pace to learning because of teachers' confident approach and their good rapport with pupils who know that their contributions to lessons are valued. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well and as a result they make good progress. Teachers do not always take account of the needs of the most able pupils in classes who, at times, are not sufficiently challenged by the class activity. Teaching assistants are a valuable part of the teaching team. They work effectively to provide sensitive, well focused support for groups and individual pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to enjoy their education and achieve well. However, teachers do not always explore the ways in which subjects can be linked together in order to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of the lesson. The good personal development programme helps pupils to develop mature attitudes towards healthy lifestyles, their future well-being and relationships with others. The curriculum is enhanced by the inclusion of French in Years 3 to 6, by visits which broaden pupils learning through first hand experiences and by visitors to school who bring with them particular expertise. Good provision for literacy and numeracy has effectively improved skills and pushed up standards, although there remains more to do to help higher achieving pupils do even better. Good provision for pupils who have additional needs, combined with well focused intervention, contribute to their good achievement. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of after school activities that contribute much to pupils' personal development. Pupils talk enthusiastically about how much they have gained from joining in with sports, music and gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Parents agree that the school provides exceptional care for their children. The school goes the 'extra mile' to ensure that pupils' particular needs are met so that they all achieve well. Staff use a very good range of strategies to welcome pupils into the school and manage behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to reflect and make choices, for example through the provision of a 'reflection room'. There is a supportive ethos in school with senior pupils acting as role models and giving good support to younger pupils. Despite the potential hazards presented by the steeply sloping site, the good levels of supervision and thoughtful behaviour of pupils means that they are safe and secure when outside the school building during break and lunchtime. Pupils are well informed of their academic targets and the progress they are making. Very good communications with parents, through regular newsletters and frequent reporting, means that they feel involved in their children's education. Good links with partner high schools ensure that pupils look forward with confidence to their next phase of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides good leadership. His vision shows a determination to do the best for all the pupils and to make them aware of what they can achieve. The senior leadership team has created a strong sense of common purpose among the staff, who feel well supported and fully involved in the life of the school. Senior leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and fulfil these well. Subject leaders provide clear guidance through their schemes of work and are beginning to work together to make learning more meaningful and enjoyable. The school's leadership is fully aware of strengths of the school and of those aspects where school leaders want to do better. They have successfully gained the confidence and support of parents, who are keen to play an active role in their children's education. Close monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils and the setting of ambitious targets have raised expectations and standards. A well planned approach to developing teachers' confidence and competence means that the resources of the school are used well. Teaching assistants are skilled and give significant help and support in work in the classes. The governing body brings a wide range of skills and knowledge to the school. It is well informed, ensures that pupils receive good value for money and is prepared to challenge the decisions of senior leaders. It is taking steps to work more closely with subject leaders and the school council so that it can contribute more to school improvement.

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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?	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	3
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?	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.

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

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to inspect your school recently. You made me feel very welcome and I enjoyed talking with you and hearing all the things you like about your school. You are clearly very proud of it! I found that your school gives you a good standard of education that is getting better all the time. Here are some of the things I judged to be particularly good about it:

- the outstanding care everyone takes of you and how hard all the staff and governors work to do their best for you
- your good behaviour and how well you all get on together
- your keenness to learn and the good progress you make in your lessons
- all of the extra things the staff do to make school more interesting and enjoyable for you
- the way in which all of you, and the school council in particular, contribute to the work of the school.

There are two important things I think could be better and so I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- provide more opportunities for you to reach the higher levels in English and mathematics
- plan your lessons in a way that links different subjects together, so that you have a better understanding of what you are learning.

Finally, I would like to remind you to make sure you attend regularly, keep working hard and trying your best, so that your school gets even better than it is now.

My very best wishes for the future.