

Harwood Park Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105796
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308952
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Gordon Allison

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	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Brown
Headteacher	Mrs J Pickles
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
School address	Hardfield Street Heywood Lancashire OL10 1DG
Telephone number	01706 369592
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This slightly larger than average sized school serves an area of significant social disadvantage. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below that found in most schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has gained a Healthy Schools award, Investors in People, Artsmark and Early Talk accreditation.

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. Pupils develop well academically and as individuals in a caring atmosphere. The headteacher's clear sense of purpose and determination to enable all pupils to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens are central to the success of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. It provides good value for money.

Pupils achieve well because of good teaching and thorough monitoring of their progress. Pupils enter the school with skills that are well below average, especially in reading and writing. They make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of consistent guidance from all staff and the effective use of good resources. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 are below average, but improved significantly in 2007, especially in writing, due to the effective measures that the school put in place. Results at the end of Year 6 have improved steadily in recent years and are now broadly average. Progress is good by the end of Year 6.

Most pupils enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning because of the wide range of curriculum experiences that the school provides. They understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are encouraged to help each other and, as a result, politeness and good behaviour are the norm. Behaviour on the staircases is especially good because of the care the teachers take in ensuring pupils use these safely. Pupils gain a good understanding of their own and other cultures. The effect of this can be seen in the high quality art and design work, for example, on African geometric patterns. Significant numbers of pupils are late for school which means they miss out on learning and their late arrival interrupts the lessons for others. Attendance remains below average, although the school has a number of strategies in place to improve the punctuality and attendance of all pupils.

Teaching and learning are good overall. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of the teaching. All teachers want to do their best for the pupils. The good lesson planning throughout the school illustrates the consistency of approach that the leadership expects. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers; they enjoy each other's company and, as a result, most lessons have a good working atmosphere. Although behaviour is good in most lessons, poor behaviour is not dealt with firmly enough in a small number of classes. This inhibits learning for pupils at those times. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their specific learning needs are well diagnosed and monitored. They also benefit from a high level of effective support in lessons.

Pupils know what they need to do to improve and what they should aim to achieve because of the good target-setting and progress monitoring systems. Pupils feel safe and well cared for in the school. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility are limited.

The recently established senior leadership team is developing into an effective unit which supports the headteacher well, shares her vision for how the school should develop and is effective in ensuring that the school runs smoothly. The school's performance is well monitored so that appropriate priorities are clearly identified and effective measures are quickly put into place when needed. Governors are very supportive of the school and give of their time unstintingly. However, they do not always hold the leadership rigorously to account. Progress since the previous inspection has been good and there is good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision and progress in the Foundation Stage are good. On entry to Reception most pupils have well below average basic skills in literacy, in particular. By the end of Reception, standards, especially in literacy, are below national expectations. This good progress is the result of good teaching, attractive, stimulating classrooms and the positive way in which the staff work together. Relationships are good and, consequently, the children are confident and well behaved. Activities are well planned so that the children show good learning habits and enjoy all they do. The mixed groups of Reception and Year 1 work well as the younger children see how the older children learn and behave. There is a good balance between teacher directed activities and allowing pupils to choose so that interest is maintained. High priority is given to providing support so that pupils' learning needs are met as soon as possible. The outdoor curriculum is well planned and effectively used to enrich children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good.
- Improve punctuality so that pupils do not miss out on learning.
- Provide a wider range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility so they make a greater contribution to the school community.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From the good start in the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve well across the rest of the school. Standards in Year 2 improved in 2007 but remain below average. However, most of these pupils exceeded their challenging targets. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently are also making good progress against their targets. A high number of pupils come to the school during Years 1 and 2. These pupils often do not have enough time in the school to make the amount of progress that they could. The improved results at the end of Year 2 are due to the emphasis that the school has placed on developing literacy and organising the classes so that the differing needs of the pupils are better met. Similarly, progress is good in Key Stage 2. The early identification of pupils needing help, then the provision of effective support is a major reason for this good progress. Most pupils in Year 6 exceeded their targets in 2007. Standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average. Reading and mathematics have improved steadily since 2002. Standards in art and design are above average and this is strength of the school. High quality artwork adorns the walls and illustrates the creativity of the pupils very well indeed.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are proud of their school. A group, drawn from a number of classes, cited 'Understanding teachers, displays, themed weeks and good work assemblies' as the main reasons for this sense of pride. In lessons, pupils display good attitudes to work, quickly settling down and showing determination to complete set tasks. Behaviour is good, not just in lessons but in the dining hall, where a calm, social atmosphere prevails. Attendance is below the national average, despite careful use of a wide range of measures to reduce absence. However, too many pupils arrive late for school, thereby missing important learning. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. They quickly grow in confidence

and older pupils are polite and courteous to adults; they work well in pairs and small groups and most express their views in a thoughtful and articulate way. Pupils' preparation for life in a multi-cultural world benefits from lessons in art and design, religious education, history and geography. This learning is enriched by visits and visitors, such as during the recent themed day entitled 'Border Moves', when pupils gained a good understanding of music and dance from around the world. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. The school council is in its infancy, and opportunities are missed to give pupils a wider range of responsibilities to influence features of school life in a positive way. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is characterised by thorough planning of lessons in which skills are built up gradually and reinforced well. Marking is mostly thorough and provides pupils with clear and subject specific points for improvement. Most teachers are enthusiastic and this rubs off on the pupils who then want to do their best. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils and, in the best lessons, are revisited to check learning at the end. Pupils learn well because they are involved in the lesson through discussion, in response to questioning and in being encouraged to assess their own work. In some lessons the activities provided do not meet the needs of the different groups of pupils and this limits their progress. Behaviour in lessons is usually good but in some classes, especially in Key Stage 2, pupils are not as well managed so learning is less effective. In most lessons the pace of learning is good.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A well structured and differentiated curriculum provides breadth, balance and enjoyment for pupils to learn well. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to take part in dance, drama and school productions, although provision for team sports is limited. There is strong emphasis on developing pupils' personal development as a good personal, social and health education scheme is consistently used throughout the school. Writing and reading have improved because of the consistent use of teaching techniques such as Big Writing. Theme weeks are especially effective in

giving breadth to the curriculum. A recent 'French Day' supported the good language provision as well as providing effective partnership with a local secondary school. Good opportunities are provided for pupils to support their awareness of health and safety such as road safety events. The curriculum is regularly monitored to assess its impact on pupil learning and then adapted accordingly.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of pastoral care, support and guidance provided for pupils is good. It is built on the positive relationships between adults and pupils, and among most pupils. Parents find staff highly approachable and helpful. The small minority of pupils experiencing difficulties with their behaviour or self-confidence are well supported. Child protection requirements and health and safety procedures are in place and well established. Pupils rightly feel safe and well cared

for. Adults use praise well when pupils show positive attitudes, politeness and consideration. Support for pupils' academic progress is good. Pupils have targets, aimed at improving their attitudes as well as their work in literacy and numeracy. These targets make an important contribution to the good academic progress and personal qualities of pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very good leadership provided by the headteacher has been instrumental in the good outcomes that the school provides for its pupils. The headteacher's strong leadership has created a climate where all staff endeavour to improve the school. She is well supported by a deputy headteacher who makes a significant contribution to the good management of the school, especially in Key Stage 1. Rigorous monitoring of pupil achievement and teaching and learning, gives the leadership team the information to intervene effectively where progress is slipping and also to celebrate success. The pupil reviews, based upon detailed pupil tracking data, are particularly effective here. Therefore, the school's self-evaluation is accurate. The governing body is very supportive of the school. Members have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but do not always provide enough challenge to the leadership team.

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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	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	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We were most grateful for the kindness, cooperation and welcome we received when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you about your work; listening to what you thought of the school, looking at the excellent art work on the walls, and seeing you work hard and enjoy your lessons. I have made a list below of the main things we found out about your school.

What is good about your school.

- Your enthusiastic teachers who do all they can to help you with your work.
- You make good progress as you move through the school.
- The atmosphere is warm and friendly and staff make sure you feel safe and happy.
- Your politeness, how you help others and your good behaviour.
- You learn to play safely and know how to keep fit and healthy.
- Your good behaviour as you move around the school.
- Your very good headteacher.

There are some improvements that need to be made and these will be achieved if all pupils give their full support to them. I have asked the headteacher and the governors to make sure you have consistently good teaching throughout the school. Also, I have asked them to provide more opportunities for you to take responsibility in the school. You can also make sure you do not fall behind with your learning by coming to school on time every day.