

Hamer Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105800
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	308954
Inspection dates	7–8 November 2007
Reporting inspector	John Heap

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	301
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mrs J Smith
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Albert Royds Street Rochdale Lancashire OL16 2SU
Telephone number	01706 655756
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a broadly average sized primary school which serves a diverse population in an area with high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The new premises were opened in September 2007 and are shared with a Children's Centre and a Special School. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is close to three times the national average. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; around a third are at the early stages of learning English and supported by specific funding. The main first languages are Mirpuri, Punjabi and Urdu. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A very small number of pupils are in the care of the local authority. Children's attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is well below expected levels. The school provides a range of extended services. The school has successfully achieved the following awards: Basic skills Quality Mark; Healthy School; Eco School Bronze; Investor in People; and the Leading Aspect Award for foundation provision.

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 and provides good value for money. Inspectors agree with the school's accurate and effective self-evaluation. Parents and pupils appreciate all the school provides and they are particularly pleased with the new premises. A typical parental comment is that, 'Hamer School is a very good school. The staff and teachers are very good with children and parents. I could not wish for a better school for my child.'

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Behaviour is good. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection and fosters pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is satisfactory. They know that it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle and consider the safety of themselves and others around the school. None of these strengths would be possible without the staff's diligent care and commitment to promoting social and emotional development. This begins in the Foundation Stage, where children make the most progress in this area of their learning. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, for example, through the activities of the school council.

Achievement is good. Children join the school with poor skills and abilities. They progress well in the Foundation Stage because of the good provision and secure environment. By the time they enter Year 1, standards are still well below those expected for their age. Overall, pupils make good progress from Years 1 to 6 and this ensures that they are well placed to improve further. Nevertheless, their rate of progress is inconsistent in English, mathematics and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils. By the end of Year 6, standards are below average, but are edging upwards because of more rigorous subject management and better quality teaching. In particular, standards in writing are improving but, in some cases, expectations of the achievements of more able pupils are too low. For example, learning targets and marking for these pupils are not challenging enough and they are not required to write extensively in other subjects. Across the school, the various groups with learning difficulties are well catered for and they make good progress from their low starting points, because their work is well planned and they are ably supported.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good progress. Where it is best, there is a focus on: developing basic skills; providing opportunities to use these skills in everyday activities; and providing effective support that brings rigour to the lessons. The good curriculum promotes personal and academic progress effectively for the majority of pupils. The school caters well for most pupils' learning needs by matching carefully the support on offer to the individual. This is equally the case with the effective care, guidance and support the school provides. Parents and pupils recognise the school as a safe and secure place. The tracking of pupils' academic and personal development are well used to check on progress made and to set challenging goals.

Overall, leadership and management are good. Despite recent and highly challenging events, the senior team have steered a path that has ensured minimal disruption for pupils. There are good improvements since the last inspection and this, with the more rigorous use of assessment information, means the school is well placed to improve further. Governance is satisfactory.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children have particularly low skills in communication, language and literacy. Children make good progress and enter Year 1 with standards that, although much improved, are still well below national expectations. The coordinator leads well and, as a result, teaching is consistently good and occasionally outstanding. This has been recognised in an award for the school. The really strong organisation ensures that children settle quickly and happily, and their behaviour is consistently good. It is outstanding within the Nursery. The curriculum is packed with rich and varied activities and this has a big impact on progress, particularly in personal, social and emotional development. Children are well cared for and their progress is monitored in great detail, enabling staff to plan tasks that are well matched to children's needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science, particularly for the highest attaining pupils.
- Increase the challenge in writing for higher attaining pupils.
- Give pupils more opportunities to write in other subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils progress well from their low standards, particularly in English. However, many pupils have difficulty in quickly developing language skills, particularly those learning English as an additional language. This affects their learning across many subjects. Standards remain significantly below average. However, by the end of Year 6 there is an upward trend in results and early indications from data for 2007 show pupils making good progress. In fact, the school is ranked in the top 6% of schools nationally, for the rate of pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6, which is a big improvement on previous years. Across the school, average and lower attaining pupils progress well and higher attaining pupils make, at least, satisfactory gains. The school has recognised that more work is needed to improve standards in writing and mathematics. Last year, the focus on writing brought about improvements, but pupils are not doing enough writing across the full range of subjects. Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those learning English as an additional language and those in the care of the local authority benefit from good support and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Moral and social development is particularly strong and this has led to much improved behaviour since the time of the last inspection. Pupils enjoy school and consistently show respect for one another and the adults who care for them so well. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community, through activities such as peer mentoring and through the work of the school council. For example, pupils have been involved in making suggestions for the new playground. Older pupils welcome the opportunity to care for the younger ones, for example, by helping them to cut their food at lunchtime. Pupils know and understand that it is important to eat healthily and to take regular exercise and this has been recognised in the achievement of an award. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in their relatively new environment. They value the links with the special school and mix readily with its pupils. This adds much to their

understanding of diversity in society. Although the overall standards achieved in the school are below average when pupils leave, the good progress made in literacy and in their social skills prepares them well for their future education and life in general.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Effective teaching contributes significantly to the good progress made by pupils. Lessons are managed well and this enables pupils to learn without interruption, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school diligently and effectively promotes pupils' learning of basic skills, such as reading, number work and investigating. This work has led to the school receiving an appropriate award. Pupils who find reading difficult are supported well by skilled practitioners and set work that develops their basic knowledge and use of letter sounds. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and make learning lively and challenging, as in a Year 6 lesson where they carried out a role play for pupils to discuss. The pace of lessons is brisk and, in the best, the level of challenge is good. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the class teacher made very good use of information and communication technology (ICT) to increase pupils' response times to questions. Although pupils have learning targets, they are not always used effectively for the highest attaining pupils in writing. Moreover, marking relates more to the objective of the lesson rather than the individual learning of the pupil.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes pupils' academic progress well. The school rightly places great emphasis upon the development of basic skills. This is very important given the weaknesses that exist and persist in pupils' communication and social skills. Pupils benefit from a range of modifications to the curriculum, such as extra support for pupils with extra learning needs, in reading and mathematics. The curriculum is enriched well during the school day and afterwards. For example, visits and visitors are carefully chosen to increase pupils' experiences. In addition, opportunities for pupils have recently been extended to include a residential stay in the local countryside and thus promoting personal development well. Moreover, the programme for personal, social and health education is a strength and successfully promotes positive attitudes and good life skills, such as teamwork. These good aspects help pupils to develop effective personal skills and qualities which benefit them now and in the future.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to safeguard pupils are robust and in place. Pupils work in a safe environment, with teachers making every effort to ensure their well-being. Safety checks and risk assessments are regularly carried out. Effective strategies exist to monitor behaviour and attendance throughout the school. Procedures to deal with very isolated incidents of bullying and racism are dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified quickly and receive good individual support from the earliest stage. Good links with external agencies also provide welcome advice and guidance for pupils and their parents; for instance, support for pupils who are at the early stage of acquiring English as a second language is good. New pupils

are welcomed warmly and they quickly settle to school life. Procedures and practices to monitor academic progress are mostly effective and lead to appropriate matching of support and guidance.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has led the school very well through a difficult period caused by the move to new premises, absence of senior staff and the challenges brought about by developing new partnerships. The vision for the future is strong and is increasingly informed by: more rigorous monitoring of pupils' academic and personal achievements; a sharpening of success criteria in planning, so that all staff have a clear view of their responsibilities in raising pupils' attainment. As a result, standards are rising and progress is quickening. Senior staff make a key contribution, for example, the effective work of the English coordinator. The focus on writing in 2006/2007 has meant that standards and progress have improved and pupils are encouraged to aspire for even better outcomes. Senior managers set challenging targets, but they are also aware that the highest attainers could do better still. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive, but they are too reliant on management for their evaluations of the school, rather than having their own systems to gather information. Nevertheless, it is to the credit of all leaders and managers that the transition to new premises has been achieved very well.

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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	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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Hamer Community Primary School, Rochdale, OL16 2SU

The other inspectors and I really enjoyed being in your good school this week. We were very grateful for your warm welcome, courtesy and the help you provided.

What is good about your school.

- The children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in their learning, talk to each other and get on so well together.
- You enjoy school and your parents appreciate this.
- The really good way you share the new building with staff and pupils in the special school.
- You behave well and have really good relationships. This is a big improvement since the last time your school was inspected.
- You contribute really well to making school safe and care for each other.
- The good range of activities that make school so interesting.
- The way that your headteacher and the other adults have worked so hard to get the new premises, made sure that you were safe while the building work was going on and how they use it to help you learn and play.

To make further improvements, we have asked your school to expect more from you all in English, mathematics and science, and especially those of you who find learning a bit easier than most. I know that you will want to help by always doing your best work and following the advice from your teachers. We have also asked the school to make sure you have lots of opportunities to write in all your subjects. We have asked the staff to make sure that those of you who find learning easy have harder work to do in writing.

The inspection team wishes you well and good luck for the future.