

## Hallwood Park Primary School and Nursery Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111210
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	310533
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Martin

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	137
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr C Keam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Carole Howard
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 May 2003
<b>School address</b>	Hallwood Park Avenue Hallwood Park Runcorn Cheshire WA7 2FL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 716336
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school. A decline in the local birth rate has caused reducing numbers but the school remains popular. It mainly serves an area which has high economic disadvantage and unemployment. Nearly half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above the national average. Nearly half the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is far higher than the national average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the start of the school year is high, in some years affecting nearly half of the pupils in some classes. The school is involved with a number of partnerships within and beyond the community, including an Education Action Zone and the local Children and Young People's Network. The school has received a number of national and local awards, including a Basic Skills Quality Mark (2005), Healthy Schools status (2006) and the Active Mark (Gold) in 2006; from its partner local authority it has received Tasty Tuck and Healthy Schools awards.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school that provides very good value for money. Although standards are below average at the end of Year 6, the school's exceptionally good work in meeting pupils' social and emotional needs helps them to overcome significant barriers to learning to achieve well in relation to their exceptionally low starting points. This makes its performance overall outstanding.

Outstanding leadership and teaching are leading to improved standards, as seen in the 2007 national test results and the quality of pupils' work. This is a school that makes a real contribution to pupils' life opportunities by providing exceptionally good care for their social and emotional needs. Pupils develop high aspirations for their future because their personal and social development is exceptionally good. Good provision for the very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that they make at least good progress towards achieving their learning targets. Pupils benefit from a high quality, broad and balanced curriculum with lots of rich and enjoyable activities and tasks, which add value to their academic and personal development. The school provides a curriculum that focuses strongly on improving language and thinking skills, although the impact of this is not yet fully evident in pupils' achievement or in the standards they reach. Lessons and other planned activities are very relevant to pupils' own experiences; this makes learning fun, active and pertinent to their needs. Behaviour and attitudes are exceptionally good; pupils' excellent knowledge and understanding of the agreed school rules results in very positive relationships and a strong empathy with the needs of others. Pupils speak confidently about their aspirations and how their school helps them to improve their own lives and those of other people. Their contribution to the wider community is highly valued by neighbourhood partners, who value how well the school is preparing future generations to collaborate with them to improve the quality of life.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet current government requirements; pupils, too, have a very good knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They also have an exceptionally good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, including an awareness of the dangers of substances detrimental to their health. The headteacher's outstanding leadership adds value to the quality of teaching and the contribution all members of staff make to each pupil's progress. Team work and staff morale are high. Systems for checking and improving the school's effectiveness are thorough, robust and exceptionally well coordinated. Lines of responsibility are clear and governors fulfil their roles well, supporting and challenging the school where required.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

On entry to the Nursery class, children's skills are very low compared with those typical of children of their age. The children in the Nursery and Reception classes are very well cared for and well taught. Staff have high expectations of children's progress. They engage children in exciting learning, making good use of questions to stimulate their interests, with particular emphasis on personal, social and language development. Children become confident and engage well with learning, choosing activities and enjoying helping. Their progress is good. By the end of the Reception year the majority enter Year 1 with skills below national expectations. However, good teaching ensures that children achieve well. Staff and children plan learning together so that all areas of learning are well covered in the classrooms. Leadership and management of

the Foundation Stage are good. The transition from Nursery to Reception and on to Year 1 is very well planned and ensures that the curriculum is adapted to meet the learning needs of all children.

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

- Focus on raising standards in English, mathematics and science.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The good start made by children in the Foundation Stage provides them with learning skills that enable them to achieve well as Year 1 and 2 pupils. In Years 3 to 6 pupils have a clear understanding of their learning targets and what to do to achieve as well as they are able, so they make good progress. Although standards remain well below the national average by Year 6, higher proportions of pupils attained the expected Level 4 or above in English, mathematics and science in 2007 than in recent previous years. The school's own targets for English were exceeded, reflecting the impact of its outstanding work in removing barriers to learning. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress as a result of the effective support that they receive.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Positive, friendly relationships, trust and mutual care are clearly evident in the school; they are key features of pupils' outstanding personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are conscientious and hard working. They take duties seriously, knowing that rights and privileges bring responsibilities. They work well in partnership with the adults to make their school a happy, caring and thriving community. Pupils very much enjoy coming to school. Although attendance is below average, the school is doing all that it can to address the issue. The attendance mentor is working particularly hard with parents to secure improvements and this is beginning to have an impact. The elected school councillors give a good example to others through working in partnership with adults to improve the school. Effective training for peer mentors and play leaders, who give guidance and help to others, gives pupils a good appreciation of their duty to care for others. Pupils know that exercise, nourishing foods and rejecting harmful substances will help them to live healthy lifestyles. They say that they feel safe in school and know who will help them if anything concerns them. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of their responsibilities as members of the wider community. They enjoy very good opportunities to plan and run fundraising events for charities. Older pupils benefit from the wide range of opportunities that help them to understand about the world of work, finance and enterprise, such as the bank organised by Year 6 pupils.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Exceptionally good teaching, based on a very secure foundation of respectful and trusting relationships, enables pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning and make good progress. During lessons, excellent relationships are evident; teachers respect pupils' need to take time to think before speaking, giving pupils the confidence to answer questions, articulate their

thoughts and share their opinions. Teachers value what pupils say and this creates a very positive atmosphere for learning. Teachers and classroom assistants form good teams to support pupils' learning. This is beginning to add even greater value to pupils' learning, particularly in the development of their thinking and language skills. Improvements to writing seen in books and on display reflect this, but it is not yet reflected in the overall standards pupils reach. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and accurately, using the information particularly well to plan suitable work for those of different ability. They also keep very effective records of pupils' learning targets and are skilled at explaining to pupils in language they understand how these targets can be achieved. This has a strong impact on learning and is helping to improve standards. The effective use of interactive whiteboards has a positive impact on teaching and pupils agree that they help to bring learning to life alongside the highly interesting activities provided for them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum matches pupils' needs exceptionally well. Work in the classrooms is greatly enriched with very good opportunities that promote learning through direct experience, making learning relevant and fun. Pupils very much enjoyed the recent modern foreign language 'taster' day where, among the things they tasted, was food from countries that included France, Spain and Italy. The many well-attended extra-curricular activities available to pupils include a wide range of creative arts and sporting activities. These have been instrumental in enabling the school to achieve the Gold Active Mark. This wide range of sporting activities encourages pupils to appreciate and value their physical well-being as well as enabling them to learn social skills, such as through the 'Mini Whistlers' refereeing scheme. Improving basic skills and pupils' good awareness of wider social and educational opportunities, such as through the visit to Liverpool University, prepare them very well for their future economic well-being. Pupils enjoy a very good range of opportunities to develop workplace and enterprise skills, including those provided through a highly beneficial collaboration with the local Education-Business Partnership. There is good provision for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the school does well to signpost wider opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to extend their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Parents overwhelmingly value the care this school gives to their children. 'I think my child is exceptionally well cared for in this school' was a typical comment. Pupils agree, valuing the very good guidance and support they are given to aid their learning and personal well-being. Because every pupil is well known to staff, each is treated as an individual and with dignity; at the same time they learn exceptionally well that they all have a duty of care to each other. The school takes the health and safety of its pupils very seriously. Appropriate systems are in place for assessing risks. Regular events, such as awarding 'Young Citizen of the Future' prizes, help to ensure that positive relationships and good personal development contribute to the quality of care that pupils show for each other. The exceptionally good knowledge that staff have of pupils' academic and personal progress enables them to provide outstanding guidance and support for pupils to achieve their personal learning targets.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 1

School leaders, governors and staff are dedicated to meeting the social and learning needs of all pupils. High quality leadership and exceptionally strong teamwork is helping the school to improve achievement and standards, thereby fulfilling its mission. Management of the school is outstanding, seen, for example, in the quality of partnerships that have been set up with the wider community and other educational organisations. These partnerships help the school in its drive to raise standards. The headteacher and deputy head have established outstanding team leadership and management practices that ensure the school is making rapid strides forward. Astute management of resources underpins improvement particularly well. Governors make a good contribution to this process; their understanding of the needs of pupils and their direct involvement in checking the work of the school helps them to work alongside staff to achieve school improvement priorities. The school evaluates its effectiveness very well; it uses its development plan very skilfully as a working document to drive improvement. It is very well placed to bring about further 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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### 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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

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

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. You were all very friendly and helpful and I enjoyed finding out from you how much you enjoy learning. You told me that you think your school is very good. I am sure that you will be pleased to know that I agree with your opinion - you do have an exceptionally good school.

Here are some of the many very good things I saw. In your lessons you listen well and think carefully about your answers. This is helping you to get better at speaking good sentences, which is also improving your writing. This pleased me because it helps you to be ready for your move to high school. I saw how well you work with your teachers to help your school to be a good place to learn. I thought you were very well behaved and caring and I was impressed by how well you all get along as school friends. Your understanding of the school rules and why you have them is wonderful! I particularly liked how well your school looks after you and helps you to be happy, healthy and safe. You told me how much you enjoy the interesting lessons you have as well as all the visits and other activities that make it fun to be good learners. I also liked the way you do many things to give something back to your community, such as planting bluebells and singing in festivals.

Your school is working very well to improve your learning and the standards you reach. From my discussions with your headteacher I know that she is determined that everyone in your school will keep up with this work. I've asked your teachers to help you even more in this by making sure your speaking and thinking skills develop well. This will help you to achieve higher standards.

You have an outstanding school that plays an important part in your community. I know from talking to many of you that you enjoy working to make your school even better. I am sure that you will keep helping your teachers to make sure that Hallwood Park School and Nursery stays an outstanding place to learn. I send you my best wishes for the future.