

Harrop Fold School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133351
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	316098
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Angela Headon HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	833
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr W Pennington
Headteacher	Dr Antony Edkins
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2005
School address	Hilton Lane Worsley Manchester M28 0SY
Telephone number	0161 7905022
Fax number	0161 7904426

Age group	11-16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harrop Fold School is a smaller than average secondary school, serving the Worsley and Little Hulton community. It is based on two sites, which are approximately one mile apart. A new school building is presently under construction, to open in September 2008. The number of students eligible for free school meals is nearly three times the national average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) is below the national figure. Few students are from minority ethnic groups. The school was awarded specialist arts status in July 2007 and has achieved the Artsmark Gold award and the Sportsmark award. The school was removed from special measures in December 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Harrop Fold School is a satisfactory and improving school with a number of good features. Forward looking leadership and a supportive ethos ensure that students are provided with an orderly environment within which they can learn and make progress. The school has done much to strengthen the involvement of the local community and is increasingly well regarded by parents and carers. As one commented, 'The school has improved and gone from strength to strength.'

Students' achievement is satisfactory overall. The school's GCSE results have continued to improve across all performance measures and the school has, since 2004, consistently increased the number of students gaining five or more A* to C grades. Standards are rising, although they remain significantly below the national average. At Key Stage 3, however, standards and attainment in the national tests declined in all core subjects in 2007. Nonetheless, the current picture is that the school is successfully challenging underachievement and students, particularly boys, are making satisfactory progress.

The school has a strong commitment to inclusion, with good quality pastoral and behaviour support teams. Students are well cared for and supported effectively by the school. They feel safe and generally enjoy coming to school. Attendance is satisfactory and improving and the school has significantly reduced levels of exclusion. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and students feel ownership of improvements in this area. This contributes significantly to their learning and personal development. Vulnerable students and those with LDD are particularly well cared for and achieve in line with their abilities.

The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons continue to improve with both good and outstanding practice evident, particularly in Key Stage 4. Positive relationships between staff and students and the effective use of assessment throughout the school are helping to ensure that students make at least satisfactory progress. Students understand their national curriculum and GCSE targets and know how well they are doing in lessons, although teachers' marking does not yet consistently provide guidance on how they can improve further. The school recognises that teaching in Key Stage 3 is not yet as effective as that in Key Stage 4 where students make good progress.

Good use of the specialist arts status is already apparent through development work within the curriculum and productive partnership work with schools and local business. The school's well-considered curriculum provides relevant pathways for students of all abilities in both key stages. The foundation curriculum in Year 7 and vocational programmes at Key Stage 4 ensure students have opportunities to develop both their academic and personal skills.

The executive headteacher effectively demonstrates strong and focused leadership, with a determination to improve the school further. He works collaboratively with governors and a supportive workforce who are all equally ambitious for the future of the school. Together, they have an accurate picture of the school's current performance and what is required to maintain the momentum of improvement. Progress is carefully monitored through the use of challenging, yet realistic targets and the rigorous monitoring of teaching quality. The school provides good value for money and in light of the good leadership, the improving picture in standards and the overall quality of teaching and learning, the school's capacity to improve is also good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the achievement of all students in order to raise standards.
- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching, particularly in Key Stage 3.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Students' attainment on entry to the school is below average. The progress they make between Years 7 and 11 is satisfactory overall and continuing to improve.

There has been a history of below average attainment at Key Stage 3 and this was evident in the 2007 national test results. However, the school met its targets for the percentage of students attaining expected levels in both English and mathematics. The school's monitoring information shows that students currently in Year 9 are making satisfactory progress, as are those students in Year 10 who previously underachieved. Standards are rising and attainment in Year 9 is close to the national average.

At Key Stage 4, the school's examination results for 2007 show an improving trend of attainment. The proportion of students gaining five or more GCSE grades at C or above and the number gaining a C grade or above in English or mathematics has increased, although, in both subjects, standards remain below average. Students attained good results in a number of subjects including art, design technology, drama, French and Spanish, where attainment was above the national figure. The percentage of students attaining the highest GCSE grades also continued to improve. Overall, progress in Years 10 and 11 is good.

Recent improvements in procedures for tracking students' progress ensure that teachers, students and their parents are now well informed about the progress students are making. This is contributing well to improving standards and achievement, particularly for boys, whose progress overall was previously inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school modestly evaluates the personal development and well-being of its students as satisfactory. Inspectors judge it to be good.

Students feel safe and report that bullying incidents are rare and, when they do occur, are dealt with effectively. Students appreciate the high visibility of senior staff around the school before and during lessons. Strategies to raise attendance and punctuality continue to be successful. Attendance is broadly average and students are increasingly enjoying their education.

Behaviour in lessons and around school is good. Older students are keen to report how much better it is now than when they joined the school. Exclusions have also declined significantly. The school has appropriate provision to deal with the poor behaviour of a small minority of students who may disrupt the learning of others.

The students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Citizenship lessons and the successful introduction of the 'Harrop citizen' programme contribute to raising students' awareness of the effect of their actions on others. Students are increasingly involved with the

wider community and participate in charitable activities. Their views, whether elicited individually or through the school council, are listened to. As a result, the majority of students show initiative and willingly accept responsibility.

The school, working with local community representatives, has done much to improve the health and physical well-being of its students. Students understand the importance of healthy eating and the benefits of exercise and they were consulted when changes were made to the lunch-time menu. Personal, social and health education lessons give students the opportunity to understand the dangers of sexual health risks and substance abuse. Access to basic skills qualifications, work related opportunities and an effective careers programme help to prepare students for their roles in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Through rigorous monitoring, lessons continue to improve, with effective systems in place to promote good practice. All lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory or better. The vast majority of teaching in years 10 and 11 is now good or outstanding.

In all lessons, clear learning objectives are shared with the students through the use of the four-part-whiteboard. Careful planning ensures that class activities are well sequenced so that students are able to build effectively on previous learning. With few exceptions, students show good attitudes to their work, are motivated and behave well.

In the best lessons, teachers are knowledgeable about students' prior attainment and through skilful questioning assess their progress throughout the lesson. Expectations of all students are high and teachers promote a 'can do' attitude to learning. Students clearly enjoy these lessons and accelerated progress is evident. In contrast, in less effective lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, tasks are not sufficiently challenging, with a limited range of activities which do not fully meet all students' needs.

Students have clear learning targets and know how well they are doing. The assessment of progress using the red, amber, green (RAG) system is clearly understood by students and is a key feature in raising standards. Marking is satisfactory overall. However, inconsistencies exist between subjects and classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum for its students. The foundation programme in Year 7 eases the transition from primary school with a clear emphasis on improving literacy and numeracy skills and encouraging independent learning. In Years 8 and 9, students experience a more subject based curriculum and the school ensures that more vulnerable students continue to be well catered for.

Curriculum pathways offered to students in Key Stage 4 enable them to choose combinations of courses closely matched to their needs and interests. There is good provision for work-related learning and the school works well with external partners. Notable features include the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network course and personalised learning programmes,

leading to certification as well as promoting life skills, raising self-esteem and improving attendance.

The achievement of specialist arts status has already led to enhanced links between arts and vocational subjects and is beginning to impact on learning across all curriculum areas. A good range of visits, visiting speakers and extra-curricular activities enrich and extend learning and are available to students. The school continues to work with students and the wider community to raise participation levels.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support for students are good. Parents praise the quality of support provided for their children. Students say that they feel safe and value the effective action taken by the school in dealing with issues, such as bullying. Vulnerable students and those in care are very well supported and the provision for students with LDD is good, with effective use of personalised learning and behaviour plans. The 'blue room' offers good support for those students who are unable to fully engage with learning in the classroom.

Good links with feeder primary schools and the introduction of the foundation curriculum help to ensure that the transition for Year 7 students runs smoothly. Equally, students at the end of Year 9 and 11 are well supported with careers information. The academic progress of students is carefully monitored and tracking systems are used to identify underachieving students, who then receive appropriate intervention. As a result the majority of students know how much progress they are making. Safeguarding systems are robust and child protection procedures are well understood, regularly reviewed and work well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The executive headteacher's outstanding leadership has been a force in ensuring that the school continues to drive forward, at pace, the improvement agenda. He has fostered a strong sense of teamwork amongst all the staff who are fully committed to improving student performance.

Senior leaders have complementary skills. They work very well together, giving highly effective support to both the headteacher and middle leaders. Regular focused meetings between senior and middle leaders provide valuable opportunities to assess subject and student performance. Through the self-review process, middle leaders continue to develop and feel supported, empowered and fully accountable in their leadership role.

Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are robust. There is much in place to encourage teachers to seek and share good ideas and to develop effective practice. The school's commitment to improving the quality of teaching, through teaching and learning groups, has been particularly successful. Senior leaders have a secure view of the quality of lessons.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the school knows itself well. As a result the school's strategic and action plans, with clear success criteria, are effectively used to move the school forward. There are good arrangements for performance management and professional development and the school sets challenging yet realistic targets, which are actively shared with all learners.

Governors are well informed, supportive and are ambitious for the future of the school. They understand the school's strengths and are confident in holding leaders to account for areas requiring improvement. Although the school will shortly move into a new building, this process has not disrupted school life and governors and school leaders have maintained their focus on improving outcomes for students. The school has made good progress in addressing all issues from the last inspection.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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

Following our visit to your school, we would like to thank you for making us feel welcome and for speaking to us in lessons and at social times about your experiences. As well as looking at your work, we read the questionnaires completed by your parents and carers. This proved very helpful.

You are proud of your school and you told us how much it has changed in recent years. You appreciate the way that your teachers are working with you to help you to achieve the best in all you do. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school and you emphasise how behaviour has improved. We were impressed with your good attitude to learning and smart appearance.

We are pleased to tell you that your school provides you with a satisfactory and improving education. Your school also has a number of good features.

This is a summary of our main findings which we hope will be of interest to you.

- Your school is very well led and managed and has good plans in place to improve further.
- Overall you make satisfactory progress with improving GCSE results.
- You receive good care, support and guidance and the school is a safe place to work and learn.
- Overall, teaching is satisfactory and continuing to improve. It is particularly good in Years 10 and 11.
- The curriculum is good and well matched to your needs and interests.

So that your school continues to improve, we have asked Dr Edkins and the governors to continue to improve your test and examination results and make sure that more teaching is good or outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 3.

We hope you continue to enjoy your time at your school and wish you all every future success.