

Helmshore Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119195
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326966
Inspection dates	19–20 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Yvonne Clare

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	335
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Hayton
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Myers
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gregory Fold Helmshore Rossendale Lancashire BB4 4JW
Telephone number	01706 213756
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school where the majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. It has fewer girls on roll than boys. There are very few pupils with an entitlement to free school meals. A below average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the percentage with a statement of special educational need is twice the national average. The school has been awarded two Learning Excellence awards, National Healthy Schools Status, Lancashire Racial Equality kite mark and the Artsmark Silver Award. The school has Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) 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, where the effectiveness of the EYFS is outstanding. The strong sense of community within the school results in good care, support and guidance that contribute well to pupils' excellent personal development. The strong sense of pride in the school is reflected in the high quality of the learning environment, dazzling displays and effective administration and maintenance. This school is warm and welcoming and provides an atmosphere that is safe and where pupils' relationships with each other and with staff are good. Its partnerships with others, through networks and links, are good and enhance the provision for pupils. The overwhelming majority of the parents feel that school is a happy and caring haven. Many shared the view put forward by one parent who remarked, '... a lovely school and a credit to all the staff who put so much effort into creating such a happy environment in which to learn and make friendships.'

Achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. Standards on entry to the Reception class represent the full range of abilities, with the majority of children demonstrating skills typically seen in 4 year olds. They make excellent progress and the majority enter Year 1 having achieved beyond national expectations. Results in the tests taken at age 7 show pupils to be attaining standards in line with all schools nationally. The school's results in the 2007 national tests for 11 year olds show standards to be broadly average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The 2008 unvalidated test results for Year 6 pupils indicate standards have risen significantly in all three tested subjects. The school has rightly identified that too few pupils are attaining the higher levels and has taken steps to address this issue. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by dedicated support staff who, together with the use of realistic and appropriate individual learning plans, ensure that these pupils participate fully in lessons and other activities.

The personal development of pupils is outstanding, with good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are open, friendly, well behaved and responsible young people who contribute outstandingly to the local community with their visits and charitable acts. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and understand the importance of taking regular exercise. They are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. School council members take their work seriously and play an important part in the school. Rigorous procedures are in place to promote health and safety, child protection and the safeguarding of pupils. Pupils feel safe and secure; bullying is rare. They trust their teachers and love school, their good attendance paying testament to this.

Good teaching and, as a consequence, good learning are evident. Collaborative planning and good teamwork ensure continuity between classes. Assessment information and a thorough tracking system provide opportunities to inform pupils' progress and enable teachers to match tasks to ability, although this is not always used effectively, particularly for more able pupils. The good curriculum places an emphasis on ensuring relevant, first-hand local experiences for pupils to bring learning to life, such as studying the nearby textile industry. Opportunities to learn French and play musical instruments, visitors and a good range of out of school activities enhance this provision well.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides perceptive leadership, with good support from an able leadership team. Together they focus strongly on the drive for improvement. As a result, the school is well placed to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Provision in the EYFS is outstanding. There is a range of ability on entry to the Reception, but attainment is generally typical for this age. Children achieve very well. Planning is excellent. A wide range of activities, indoors and out, are available in all weathers. These help to develop children's skills and promote their enjoyment of learning. The school ensures that skills from different areas of the curriculum are seamlessly woven together in order to make learning interesting. Staff keep a very close check on individual progress so that the next steps in children's development are carefully targeted. Personal development and well-being are enhanced by the very warm relationships between children and staff and by the numerous opportunities for them to work independently and together. Children learn to take turns, persevere with their tasks and make choices about their activities. Children are very well cared for and settle quickly into routines. Leadership and management are excellent and good teamwork seen throughout the EYFS promotes the continuity of learning into Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further refine targets to engage pupils more effectively in supporting their learning.
- Monitor more rigorously and regularly to ensure improved levels of challenge for all pupils, particularly the more able.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and achievement for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is good. Since 2005 standards by the end of Year 2 have been broadly average. Results in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have fluctuated from above average to broadly in line in English and mathematics. The school attributes fluctuations to cohort differences and fewer pupils attaining the higher levels in some years. However, standards in science have remained above national levels for four out of the last five years. School tracking of pupils shows more pupils making accelerated progress and regular progress meetings between staff ensure the opportunity to swiftly address any apparent underachievement. A successful focus on writing and mathematics has shown improvement in provisional 2008 results for the Year 6 pupils and the school has achieved its challenging targets. The school is rightly focusing on providing opportunities for more pupils to reach the higher levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal development and well-being in school is outstanding, with good spiritual moral, social and cultural development. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community, for example, by willingly accepting responsibilities for tasks around school including serving as 'playground buddies'. Pupils get on extremely well with one another and are very sensitive to the needs of others. Their behaviour is exemplary both in class and around school. They trust and respect their teachers, report that bullying is very rare and feel very safe and happy in school. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the after-school clubs and trips out of school. They are very knowledgeable about healthy food options and have an excellent understanding of why a healthy diet and exercise helps them to grow and learn. Pupils' exceptionally positive

attitudes to work ensure they are remarkably well placed to take full advantage of the next phase of their education and beyond. Pupils put their own business skills into practice very successfully as they plan, organise, cost and run theme days organised through the year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned, although work is not always accurately matched to pupils' abilities. Teachers are enthusiastic, have good subject knowledge and enjoy their work. Throughout the school pupils respond to work extremely well, partly due to the good relationships that exist between staff and learners. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons. In every class teachers establish orderly routines which children follow. Everyone works together as a team to maximise the quality of the school experience and good quality displays of pupils' work brighten classrooms and corridor environments. Whilst assessment and tracking procedures are in place, work is not always tailored correctly to pupils' needs. Outstanding features observed in lessons included exciting delivery, high levels of pupil interest, challenging questioning, the opportunity for pupils to make decisions and variety, all leading to a fast pace of learning and above all enjoyment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It fulfils statutory requirements but requires refinement to ensure it consistently meets the needs of the more able pupils. The emphasis on personal development is highly effective and pupils are taught how to respect and value each other. All teaching staff hold curriculum responsibilities and there are strategic plans in place to maintain and enrich the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Teachers are working towards an activity-based approach to learning however, there is a need to further develop their role to enable them to affect standards overall. There are some good additional elements provided, through musical tuition, modern foreign languages, school productions, visits, visitors and some inspirational artwork adorning the school hall. The range of extra-curricular activities offered and a variety of sporting opportunities promotes a healthy lifestyle whilst developing pupils' skills and self-esteem.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Children are valued and consequently learn in an atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. Relationships with parents and carers are very positive and most feel that the school responds promptly to any concerns they may have. They speak highly of the care and support provided by the school. Statutory requirements to safeguard pupils are in place, including those necessary for school visits. Pupils feel safe, well-looked after and are willing to turn to adults in school for support and advice.

The school works successfully to identify and provide support to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support their needs. Guidance given to pupils on social, moral and health issues is good. Assessment and tracking procedures

are in place and thoroughly record pupils' progress. Target setting for pupils is underway but is not yet sufficiently focused to enable all pupils to be secure about improving their work and making the necessary progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Staff work enthusiastically, ensuring that pupils are happy, do their best and have equal access to all activities. The headteacher provides sensitive leadership and, together with an effective leadership team, clearly identifies priorities for improvement. The school is improving as a result of a number of effective strategies, but monitoring and evaluation of the outcomes of these is not always rigorous or regular enough to effectively inform the next steps in the cycle. Leaders have been successful in ensuring the school contributes well to community cohesion within the local setting. Strong local partnerships enhance pupils' learning experiences and activities within the school seek to raise pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of modern British society.

The school's self-evaluation is good and judgements are accurate. Governors are supportive, well informed and are developing their role as 'critical friends.' School development planning correctly identifies priorities for the school and performance management targets are closely linked to school improvement. The success of current improvements suggests that the school has a good capacity to maintain its progress.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Helmshore Primary School, Lancashire, BB4 4JW

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome in your school and for your help during the recent inspection. We loved seeing all your beautiful art work and thought how hard you had worked on them and how you must have enjoyed your project on Roald Dahl. We thought your behaviour was excellent and you were so polite and treated each other well. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school.

We think Helmshore is a good school. All the staff work very hard to help you do your best and all of you work as a team to make your school the good school that it is. You told us that you liked school and enjoy your lessons as well as the clubs, visits and visitors.

You amazed us with how much you know about staying safe and being healthy. You also care for each other very well and enjoy all the jobs and responsibilities your teachers ask you to do.

Although you do well, we think some of you could do even better and so we have asked the school to check often that your work is really making you think very hard about what you are learning, particularly those of you who find your work easy. We have also asked your school to find ways to help you to do even better, by making sure you understand how you can improve your work.

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Keep working hard and coming to school regularly so that you continue to do well!

Best wishes

Yvonne Clare

Lead inspector