

High Lawn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105156
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336435
Inspection dates	13–14 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Jane Austin HMI

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 of pupils on the school roll	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Kay
Headteacher	Mr M Williams
Date of previous school inspection	0 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. The inspectors visited 15 lessons and held meetings with the headteacher, staff, governors, groups of pupils and the school council. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation including the school improvement plan, assessment information, reports from the School Improvement Partner and minutes of governing body meetings. Responses to the school's own questionnaire completed by pupils in Years 1 to 6 at the end of last term were considered alongside those in 127 parents' questionnaires and 40 staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of measures taken by the school to arrest a drop in standards in 2009, particularly in mathematics at Key Stage 2
- how well pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, learn and make progress
- how well the school promotes community cohesion.

Information about the school

This larger than average primary school serves an area where socio-economic circumstances, while mixed, are generally better than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority of pupils are White British; the largest minority ethnic group is of Indian heritage. A lower than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well below average as is the number with statements of special educational needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a Nursery class with 52 part-time places and two Reception classes. The school provides care for pupils before and after school as well as during the holidays. The school has gained Healthy School status, the Basic Skills award, Activemark and the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

High Lawn Primary is a good school where pupils develop into mature, courteous individuals with excellent attitudes to learning. The outstanding care, guidance and support provided for pupils, and notably for those with greater needs, make a very significant contribution to this. Pupils are confident, happy learners because the school provides a welcoming environment in which they feel safe and relish opportunities to make an outstanding contribution. Pupils talk animatedly about their roles, for instance as school councillors, prefects, play leaders and librarians, and discharge their responsibilities seriously. They contribute enthusiastically to the local and wider community through activities such as concerts in local care homes, producing and distributing the school newspaper, and lots of charitable fundraising.

The outstanding curriculum fosters pupils' enjoyment of school life through many activities that enrich learning, such as the visit to Quarry Bank Mill which took place during the inspection. Participation is high in the numerous extra-curricular activities that cover a wide span of interests including samba, gardening and cheerleading. Pupils' outstanding grasp of the need to make healthy choices is very well supported by the many opportunities available to play sport, including competitively.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well. When they join the Nursery their skills and aptitudes are similar to those expected for children of their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and by the beginning of Year 1 almost all are well placed to tackle the demands of Key Stage 1. Overall, pupils make good progress to reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. However, rates of progress are uneven, with learning gaining pace in Key Stage 2. Overall, teaching and the use of assessment are good. However, there are marked variations in the quality and effectiveness of assessment. The school has some strong practice on which to build to ensure that the next small steps in learning are shared more clearly and consistently with individual pupils than is currently the case.

Leadership, management and governance are good. The headteacher is successful in drawing pupils, parents and other partners together to develop the school's life as richly as possible. An example of this is the current drive to gain international school status which is resulting in an increasing number of links with schools across the world.

However, while the school's priorities for improvement are a broadly accurate basis for steering the school forward, a lack of fine-tuned evaluation is hindering detailed and specific planning for the often small but significant changes needed to move performance up a gear.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rigour with which the school's work is analysed in order to focus strategic planning sharply on improving outcomes for learners.
- To improve pupils' progress further, develop the use of assessment by:
 - disseminating and embedding the best practice in the school
 - using questioning to gauge pupils' understanding of their learning
 - ensuring all pupils are provided with detailed feedback both orally and through marking.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' strong appetite for learning, their good behaviour, above average attendance and exemplary punctuality all contribute well to their good progress. Rates of progress are similar for all groups. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is outstanding. They reach above average standards, are adept at using ICT, and show a great deal of pride in their work and its good presentation. They collaborate very well with one another on tasks, demonstrate high levels of perseverance and a keen desire to succeed. The work of the school council exemplifies the way pupils rise to the challenges of making decisions, taking the initiative in organising events, and raising funds for their chosen projects. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall with notable strengths in their moral and social development. Pupils' cultural development is comparatively weaker, something the school has recognised and is working to improve.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching observed during the inspection ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with the majority at least good. Consistent strengths seen in good or better lessons include the positive relationships between pupils and adults, effective modelling of successful learning by the teacher, and good planning for a range of activities to meet the differing learning needs of pupils. These features, combined with teachers' good subject knowledge, make a strong contribution to pupils' good learning and progress. Interactive learning technologies are used well by most teachers, and regularly by pupils, and these opportunities increase pupils' engagement in lessons. Satisfactory lessons featured elements such as protracted whole class teaching sessions that reduced both the pace and levels of concentration by pupils, resulting in a slower rate of learning for most.

The use of assessment varies considerably both between classes and subjects. Best practice ensures pupils are aware of their current learning and provides clear guidance on how to move forward in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, this best practice in assessment, including the use of questioning to extend pupils' thinking, is not well developed or embedded across the school.

The outstanding curriculum is broad and balanced. Enterprise activities and theme weeks provide memorable experiences as well as extended opportunities to develop business and other skills. There is effective tailored support and intervention to meet the needs of pupils who find learning difficult or those who need additional support at times. Through productive partnerships the school makes a range of additional provision for pupils who are gifted and talented.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Their individual needs are taken into account and support for those facing challenging circumstances is highly effective. To achieve this, the school works very well in partnership with parents and a range of agencies.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1
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How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders, staff and governors work together with a sense of common purpose and commitment to the school; staff morale is high. The school works closely and effectively with parents and carers, consulting them regularly and responding to suggestions. As a consequence, parents have a great deal of confidence in the headteacher and staff as exemplified in these comments in inspection questionnaires: 'I couldn't wish for a better school for my children' and 'An excellent school with very good teaching and support staff.'

The school's self-evaluation is generally accurate. There are appropriate systems in place for monitoring the school's work, with subject leaders playing a growing part in reviewing areas of the curriculum. Senior leaders know where the school's strengths and areas for development lie and this is evident in the school's improvement plan. However, analysis of the school's priorities lacks the depth required to target actions precisely on areas that will further improve outcomes for pupils.

Governance is good. Governors bring a wealth of relevant experience as well as high levels of commitment to their role. They have a firm grasp of their responsibilities and discharge these very effectively. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are good and thoroughly audited by governors. Governors have contributed well to developing the school's good approach to community cohesion. Several carefully targeted local projects are complemented by growing e-links with a number of schools, locally and beyond, aimed at broadening pupils' encounters with those from different backgrounds. The school promotes equal opportunities well, responding thoughtfully to meet the needs of those who might otherwise be disadvantaged. The school's capacity to improve is good and it provides good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Children enjoy school, behave well and form good relationships. They are safe and well cared for. They settle quickly because induction arrangements are good and staff respond sensitively to children's needs. Home visits by staff form the basis of a good partnership with parents before children start. This is maintained in a range of ways such as ready access to children's 'learning journeys' to which parents are welcome to contribute.

When children join the Nursery class their skills are generally in line with those expected for their age. Teaching is good so children make good progress. On the basis of regular assessments, staff plan activities that are responsive to children's interests as well as matched to the next steps in their learning. Children settle quickly and sustain their attention on activities of their choice. The environment is attractive and welcoming with Reception areas set up with a focus on support for either literacy or numeracy. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities both indoors and outdoors.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who completed the inspection questionnaire expressed positive views about the school and many took time to reinforce their responses with written comments. A small number of parents felt that the school does not take sufficient account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors found that the school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and, when possible, acts on these. A few parents expressed concerns about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged pupils' behaviour good overall and found that the school has effective systems for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Lawn Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 127 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 395 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	81	64	43	34	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	88	69	38	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	60	47	62	49	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	64	50	59	46	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	77	61	48	38	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	59	46	62	49	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	48	61	48	3	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	54	43	66	52	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	65	51	57	45	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	49	55	43	4	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	48	38	64	50	7	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	72	57	51	40	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	84	66	41	32	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Lawn Primary School, Bolton, BL1 7EX

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you and appreciated the time some of you gave up to tell us about school life. It helped us to reach our conclusion that you attend a good school where some things are outstanding.

We think the best things about your school are:

- your enthusiasm for learning and hard work
- the very wide choice of extra-curricular activities that so many of you enjoy and that help you lead healthy lives
- the mature way so many of you deal with your responsibilities, for instance as prefects and school councillors
- the many opportunities you have to contribute to your local community
- the outstanding way the staff support and care for you
- the good progress you make to reach above average standards
- your good behaviour and attendance
- the stimulating environment in the Nursery and Reception classes that helps children get off to a good start at school.

As you know from your own work, there is always something that can be improved. It's the same for your school so I have asked the headteacher and staff to:

- analyse the school's work carefully and plan improvements that will help you make even more progress
- make sure you all know exactly what you have to do next to improve your work so you learn as rapidly as possible.

I wish you all every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jane Austin

Her Majesty's Inspector

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