

Lostock Hall Moor Hey School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119880
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	339543
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Alastair Younger

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Wooldridge
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Lenahan
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Large parts of 10 lessons were observed and brief visits were made to four others to see the work being done during the Wednesday afternoon carousel of activities. All teachers were seen. Discussions were held with staff, pupils, governors and two representatives of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to school self-evaluation, the safeguarding of pupils, school improvement, curriculum planning and pupils' progress. Thirty-one parental questionnaires were analysed along with many from staff and pupils.

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

- the progress pupils are making from their low starting points
- pupils' behaviour and the impact it has on other pupils' learning opportunities
- how well teaching has been adapted to meet the changing needs of pupils
- how well change and improvement is being led and managed at all levels
- the impact of the school's specialist status in mathematics and computing.

Information about the school

The school has traditionally admitted pupils with moderate learning difficulties. In recent years increasing numbers of pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties have been admitted along with many pupils who show signs of autism. Many pupils have a complex combination of special educational needs and/or disabilities, often leading to difficulties with speech, language and communication. Each pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Boys outnumber girls by about 2:1, a ratio often found in schools such as this. Most pupils are White British. A very small minority of pupils are looked after children. Almost half of pupils are known to be eligible to free school meals. Many pupils join the school other than at the usual time. This is often at the end of Year 6 or the beginning of Year 7 when they are assessed as being unlikely to thrive in mainstream secondary schools.

The school suffered from instability over the previous school year when the headteacher was unavoidably absent for most of the time. A new headteacher took up post in September 2009. The post of acting deputy headteacher became permanent in January 2010.

The school is receiving substantial support from the local authority. It is currently designated as a specialist school for mathematics and computing.

At the time of the inspection, the youngest pupils on roll were in Year 3. There have been no children in the Early Years Foundation Stage for a number of years.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In every respect this is a satisfactory school. Many improvements have been made over the past year. The headteacher has effectively halted a period of decline and uncertainty. She quickly identified where improvements were needed and has created a sense of stability and rising morale among the large majority of staff. Staffing levels have increased slightly to help the school address more effectively the changing needs of pupils. Satisfactory self-evaluation has contributed to leaders', managers' and governors' awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The most important weaknesses have been quickly addressed. The most pressing of these was to halt the decline in pupils' behaviour. As a result of actions taken, the frequency of serious incidents has been halved over the past two terms and the number of exclusion have more than halved. Previously high staffing absence is also falling. With increased stability and good plans for further improvement, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Standing in the way of faster improvement is the fact that leadership and management duties are not yet fully dispersed, which places an over large burden on the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school has no evidence that its specialist status is currently having any impact on its overall effectiveness.

Pupils' progress reflects the quality of teaching. This is satisfactory but variable. There are pockets of good teaching but there are also several teachers who are receiving extra support from senior staff and the local authority to help them to become more effective. Strengths in teaching include the way in which teachers capitalise on good relationships with pupils in order to create a suitable learning environment. The main weakness is the lack of precision with which lessons are planned to meet the varying needs of individuals. The curriculum meets all requirements but available time is not always best used and minor imbalances are evident in the timetable. Pupils, parents and carers appreciate the satisfactory care, guidance and support the school offers to pupils. As a result of this care and support, most pupils say they feel safe. They explain that this is because they know where to go for help and support and that, in particular, the headteacher and deputy headteacher will deal quickly with problems.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers vary tasks to ensure that the differing needs of pupils are more precisely met
 - enhancing teachers' specialist skills in meeting the changing needs of the

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school population.

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - distributing leadership and management duties more broadly
 - ensuring that self-set deadlines for improvement are met.
- Improve the curriculum by:
 - ensuring that the time dedicated to different subjects reflects their status and relevance
 - ensuring that 'carousel' activities are planned and assessed more rigorously to reflect the fact that they are an integral part of the taught curriculum.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most lessons pupils learn and perform satisfactorily. They enter willingly into conversations and try hard to answer questions thoughtfully and sensibly. Most of the time pupils behave well and concentrate on what is being taught. Pupils are frequently less enthusiastic about putting pen to paper to create a written record of their learning. When tasks are set at the right level of challenge and interest, pupils show that they are capable of working independently but many are reluctant to do so, preferring instead to rely on the security of adult support.

Attainment on entry is always low owing to pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities. From this starting point, pupils make satisfactory progress. Inspection evidence shows that the progress currently being made in Key Stage 2 is broadly satisfactory. By the time they leave, the most able pupils sometimes reach Level 3 of the National Curriculum. Last year, Key Stage 4 results were better for mathematics than for English but the school has no evidence to link this with its specialist status.

Most pupils say they usually feel safe. Pupils are sometimes worried about the irrational behaviour of others but express confidence in the fact that staff respond effectively to their concerns. Behaviour was a major problem in the recent past when many older pupils responded adversely to the climate of uncertainty and the changes the school was going through. The school is currently much more settled with incidents of poor behaviour becoming increasingly uncommon. During the inspection pupils' behaviour was good, especially in lessons. Pupils are given good advice as to how to live healthily. In school they heed this advice well but a few do not seem to understand that the advice is just as relevant in their daily lives as it is in school. Attendance is broadly average. In combination with this, the progress they make in their learning and personal development ensures that their future prospects are promoted satisfactorily. Pupils show interest in other peoples' feelings, values and beliefs. They learn the difference between right and wrong but do not always realise the extent to which their own actions can make other pupils lives better or worse.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	*
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Some good teaching was observed during the inspection. No teaching was less than satisfactory. Teaching is improving in response to well targeted support and training, particularly in recognising that different pupils learn more effectively when taught in different ways. However, occasionally too much or too little is expected of pupils and tasks are not well matched to their different abilities. Most teachers strike up good relationships with pupils. Pupils respond to this by respecting them and trying hard in lessons. Teachers take care at the end of lessons, to check what pupils have remembered. In most lessons, assistants play a valuable role in helping to meet the learning and behavioural needs of pupils but there are occasions when they become bystanders and are less effective. In the best lessons, good use is made of computers to help pupils in their learning but not all teachers are equally adept at using computers to

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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

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support learning.

The curriculum is adequately matched to pupils needs. The timetable shows a realistic balance of learning opportunities, with a slight deficit in terms of the promotion of numeracy and literacy. This comes about partly because a full half-day each week is dedicated to 'carousel' activities. These are a valuable part of the curriculum because they allow pupils to make choices to participate in activities they enjoy and are interested in. The weakness lies in the fact that these activities are frequently not planned with sufficient rigour to maximise their contribution to improving pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Pupils are frequently withdrawn from lessons to receive additional support, such as speech therapy or to be included in mainstream activities. Both are valuable alternatives but they do lead to some pupils missing substantial amounts of planned courses.

Many aspects of pastoral care are good. The most vulnerable pupils are well looked after. Measures to bring more harmony to the school are taking effect. With improving behaviour comes a greater sense of security for all pupils. The effectiveness of the support that older pupils receive in preparation for leaving school is clear in that it is rare for pupils to lose touch with education or training for future employment. Much needed extra support in the form of speech and language therapy has recently been secured.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has a good and widely respected headteacher. Parents and carers express considerable confidence in her leadership and management. Pupils appreciate the changes she has wrought and most staff fully support her plans for the future. There is a weakness in that leadership and management duties are not equally shared among competent staff. Given that the school has specialist status in mathematics and computing, this has had limited effectiveness in raising standards or improving provision for the benefit of pupils in the school. Most members of staff show a keen sense of enthusiasm to develop their professional skills to meet the needs of a changing population of pupils and are being helped by a good management decision to seek additional help from the local authority.

There is a satisfactory promotion of equal opportunities. There is no evidence of prejudice or discrimination. Leaders and managers are well aware of the different

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groups of pupils served by the school and take care to ensure they are included in all activities. The main factor diminishing the promotion of equal opportunities is the fact that teachers do not always pay sufficient attention to the different learning needs of pupils.

The school ensures that pupils are kept safe and well protected. All regulations and duties are met. Care is taken to minimise risk in activities. School staff work closely with other agencies and professionals concerned with the welfare of pupils and their families. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the local community and promote community cohesion satisfactorily. The school serves a wide geographical area. It takes care to find out about the different circumstances in which pupils live and their social circumstances. The school works within a cluster of other mainstream and special schools to broaden the community's awareness of the support available for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are supportive of the school's work. Several reported that their children are much happier at Moor Hey than they were in previous schools. Parents and carers appreciate the homely feel of the school and like the fact that teachers develop a good understanding of their children. A few parents and carers feel that the misbehaviour of other pupils sometimes impacts on their own children's learning and diminishes their sense of security. Similar numbers of parents and carers feel that the school is not doing enough to help their children to lead healthy lifestyles. Several

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parents and carers commented on how much the school has improved over the past year.

Inspectors agree with parents' and carers' views. They are reassured that behaviour is rapidly improving and that with this comes a greater feeling of security among pupils. Inspectors feel that pupils are given ample opportunities to take exercise and are encouraged to eat healthily and avoid bad habits.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Lostock Hall Moor Hey 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 31 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 84 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	55	12	39	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	61	9	29	3	10	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	16	52	14	45	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	35	17	55	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	55	12	39	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	35	17	55	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	11	35	17	55	3	10	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)	14	45	12	39	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	52	13	42	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	52	10	32	2	6	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	48	13	42	1	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	58	10	32	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	20	65	9	29	2	6	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Lostock Hall Moor Hey School, Preston PR5 5SS

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your school. We visit schools every so often to see how well you are getting on and how good your school is. We feel that Moor Hey is a satisfactory school and that it is improving day by day. One of the reasons for this is that you are succeeding in improving your behaviour and this is making the school a happier and safer place.

We visited lots of lessons and saw you working hard. It was noticeable that many of you would rather talk about things rather than write about them but you are clearly proud of some of the work you are doing. It was good to see how many of you wanted to show us your best work and talk to us about it.

Nearly everything about the school is satisfactory. We want it to be good and to help it move in that direction we have made some suggestions. First, we want your teachers to ensure that you are always given work which makes you have to think but is not too hard for you. Second, we feel that it is time for more staff to take on leadership and management duties because there are far more of these duties than your headteacher and deputy headteacher can do on their own. Third, we think that better use could be made of some of the time you are in school, especially the Wednesday afternoon sessions.

Thanks again for looking after us. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Alastair Younger

Lead inspector

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