

Higher Failsworth Primary School

Stansfield Road, Failsworth, Oldham, M35 9EA

Inspection dates 5–6 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. They start school in the Nursery and Reception with skills and knowledge which are typically well below those expected for their age, and they make good progress throughout school. They leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment which is in line with the national average, and improving.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know the pupils well, and provide a range of exciting activities which ensure that they enjoy their learning and are very keen to do well.
- All adults provide very high quality care for pupils and look after them well. This ensures that the school is very inclusive, and allows pupils to thrive because they are happy and feel safe. Behaviour is good.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and other senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They have clear plans in place to ensure that the school continues to improve.
- Governance is a strength of the school. Governors take positive steps to ensure that they know the school well and are able to provide good challenge and support for senior leaders.
- The curriculum is exciting, rich and varied. Pupils benefit from a wide range of educational experiences which fosters their enjoyment of learning and contributes very well to their good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Achievement is not outstanding. The more-able pupils, especially at Key Stage 1, do not always reach the highest levels of attainment.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. Some teachers do not always use information about how well pupils are learning precisely enough to provide activities which meet the needs of all learners, especially the more-able.
- There are variations in the quality of marking. Teachers do not always provide clear enough information to pupils about what they need to do to improve their work. They do not always have high enough expectations of how pupils should present their work.
- The pace of teaching is occasionally too slow and does not allow pupils to move to independent learning activities quickly enough.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed all teachers and parts of 21 lessons. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read, and took into account the quality of the work and marking in their books.
- Opportunities were taken to talk to pupils in lessons and around school, and a formal discussion was held with a group of pupils from across Key Stage 2.
- Twenty seven responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors also took account of the school's own information about feedback from parents, and took the opportunity to talk to parents as they brought their children into school.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, governors and with a representative of the local authority; and the inspectors also considered the responses to a staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined. These included minutes of meetings, records of monitoring activities such as lesson observations, analysis of behaviour records, improvement plans and school data tracking pupils' progress, as well as safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Christine Birchall, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Peter Allan	Additional Inspector
Keith Bardon	Additional Inspector
Jean O'Neill	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Higher Failsworth Primary School is much larger than the average-sized primary school, and the number on roll is continuing to increase.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is higher than average. The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium is above average. Pupil premium funding is provided by the government to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, pupils who are looked after by the local authority and the children of military personnel. In this school, the majority of pupils supported by the pupil premium are those known to be eligible for free school meals, but there is a very small number who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.
- The school is involved in a number of partnerships, such as the Failsworth and Hollinwood primary collaborative. It also has a very small number of pupils who attend The Orchard, which is provision for pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs, run in conjunction with the other schools in the collaborative.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding, in order to increase attainment and accelerate progress, by:
 - ensuring that teachers always provide high levels of challenge, particularly for the more-able pupils
 - ensuring that marking is of a consistently high quality and always provides pupils with a clear understanding of what they need to improve, as well as raising expectations about how well pupils should present their work
 - ensuring that lessons proceed at a brisk pace in order to give more pupils chance to move quickly to activities where they work things out for themselves.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well in all key stages because of the good teaching and high quality support which they receive. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average, but because of their very low starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage this still represents good progress. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels of attainment by the end of Year 2.
- Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in speaking and listening which are particularly weak. Leaders have identified this as an area for development and there is a very strong emphasis on developing these skills throughout the school and in all aspects of the curriculum. As a result by the time pupils reach the upper end of the school, they are confident, articulate and able to express their views clearly.
- Pupils make equally good progress in English and mathematics. They are given opportunities to write in a range of different styles and the curriculum provides them with interesting stimulus to encourage them to write. There are excellent examples of written work where pupils have been encouraged to reflect on a number of issues, for example, what Heaven may be like, and have produced sophisticated and thoughtful responses. In reading, younger pupils use their phonics skills (their knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make) to help them to sound out words. Older pupils read fluently and with confidence. All say that they enjoy reading. In mathematics they have opportunities to apply their skills to solving real-life problems. This helps them to deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts.
- Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs make good progress. The school makes very good provision for meeting their needs and keeps a close track of how well they are doing. The small numbers of pupils who attend The Orchard also make good progress.
- Those pupils who are known to be eligible for pupil premium have typically reached standards which are approximately two terms behind those who are not eligible for pupil premium in both English and mathematics. However, from their starting points, this still represents good progress. Because of the careful way in which school leaders are spending the pupil premium funding, these gaps are beginning to close, and in some subjects and some year groups, those who are eligible for the pupil-premium funding are attaining more highly than those who are not.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and know how well they are doing. They place great emphasis on making learning fun, and make good use of the environment both indoors and outdoors to provide pupils with stimulating activities and plenty of opportunities to develop their ideas through discussion. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils were taking part in a Victorian themed day, and this provided the focus across all their subjects. Pupils achieve well as a result.
- Pupils benefit from skilled teaching assistants who are well managed, and so are able to support them very effectively. Those pupils who need additional support, for example, small group work outside the classroom, are identified early and their progress is closely monitored. The quality of small group work is good and ensures that those involved make good progress.
- In the lessons where progress is most rapid, teachers use skilful questioning to check how well pupils are doing. Lessons are well resourced and learning takes place at a brisk pace. Marking provides pupils with precise and helpful information about what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- In lessons where progress is less rapid, teachers spend too much time talking to the whole class and giving lots of examples of what they want them to do. While this is helpful for some pupils, it slows down the pace of learning for the more-able who need to be getting on with activities independently at a much earlier stage in the lesson.

- There is variation in the quality of marking across the school. In some classes, though marking is positive and encouraging, it does not tell pupils clearly enough how to make their work better.
- There are not yet enough examples of outstanding teaching across the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have extremely positive attitudes to school and feel safe because they are confident that they are valued and that teachers will look after them. Parents confirm that they are very pleased with the way that the school looks after their children, and that their children are happy in school. Pupils attend school regularly as a result.
- Pupils say that there is very little bullying, and that when it occurs it will always be sorted out quickly by an adult in school. They understand about the different forms which bullying can take. They are aware of the measures which the school has taken to reduce bullying, and say, for example, that incidents of bullying have been reduced now that there are so many different activities available at playtimes and lunchtime.
- Pupils behave well around school. They have a good understanding of each other's needs and care for each other well. For example, older pupils talk very maturely about their friends who have trouble managing their own behaviour, and understand why they need extra support. Because their teachers are very good role models, pupils learn to treat each other and adults with respect. They say that 'you can never be lonely' in school, because there is always someone to care for them.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. When asked, few could think of anything they would like to improve. They understand and value all the things that adults do to make school a positive experience for them.
- Because of the broad curriculum, pupils have plenty of opportunities to reflect on and discuss important issues, and they respond with maturity. They have a good understanding of right and wrong, and welcome opportunities to find out about other cultures.
- The breakfast club is effective in ensuring that those who attend have a good start to their school day.
- Occasionally, when lessons are not challenging enough, some pupils lose focus and concentration.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, who is very well supported by the rest of the leadership team, provides a clear vision and direction for the school, and has a systematic focus on raising achievement. Feedback from staff shows that they understand the school priorities, and feel valued and well supported.
- Leaders undertake a robust programme of monitoring activities to check how well the school is performing, and have accurately identified its strengths and areas for development. They have clear plans in place to address any areas of underperformance.
- There are good systems in place for tracking how well pupils are doing. Where pupils are identified as being at risk of underachieving swift action is taken to provide support. Provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is very well led and managed.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for development of individual teachers, and provide appropriate training to help them to improve their practice. Systems are in place for the performance management of teachers, linked to teacher standards, and pay progression is linked to performance. However, some of the targets set for teachers need to be more precise and clearly focused, in order to help to reduce the variation in the quality of teaching across the school.
- Subject leaders also undertake a range of monitoring activities to check how well their area is performing, and they plan a range of appropriate activities to bring about improvements. They

work well together as a team.

- The well-structured and exciting curriculum is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' academic progress as well as to their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school is effective in promoting equality of opportunity, because all groups of pupils achieve well.
- Parents are well informed about how well their children are doing and given a large amount of support where necessary to enable them to help their child with their learning. The partnerships with other schools are effective in supporting the achievement of pupils.
- The local authority has a good understanding of how well the school is performing, and provides appropriate levels of both support and challenge through regular visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is a strength of the school. Governors are very knowledgeable about how well the school is performing because they have been proactive in finding ways to gain first-hand information about the school. So, for example, they hold two 'governor days' a year where as many as possible take the opportunity to spend the day in school talking to staff, pupils and parents, and taking part in lessons. In addition they are provided with clear information by the headteacher, and this ensures that they are in a strong position to hold school leaders to account. They know how the pupil-premium funding is allocated and request regular updates to check on its impact. They also have a good understanding of the quality of teaching, and the actions, such as training and the use of performance-management targets, to bring about improvement. They ensure that all safeguarding requirements are fully met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	134784
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	412260

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	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Smith
Headteacher	Helen Hampson
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2010
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