



# Higher Failsworth Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 134784  
**LEA** Oldham  
**Inspection number** 282690  
**Inspection dates** 15 March 2006 to 16 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr James Kidd CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Stansfield Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Failsworth
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		Manchester M35 9EA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 681 2645
<b>Number on roll</b>	367	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 219 1773
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Cllr B Dawson
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Kitchen

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 15 March 2006 - 16 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 282690
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a large, two-form entry primary school, which opened in September 2004, as a result of the amalgamation of neighbouring junior and infant schools. The school caters for pupils between the ages of three and eleven and is situated between Manchester and Oldham. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low and there are few pupils whose first language is not English. Higher Failsworth Primary is working towards the Healthy Schools Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The overall effectiveness is inadequate and the school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. The school evaluates its effectiveness as satisfactory. Despite good provision in the Foundation Stage, significant improvement is required in relation to the overall achievement and standards reached by the pupils in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Although there have been recent improvements, pupils' progress is inadequate and standards remain below average in science and slightly below in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. The school has well-founded plans to improve standards and has set more challenging targets for performance in 2006 and beyond. Teaching has improved and is satisfactory, with some examples of good practice, although information and communication technology (ICT) is not used effectively and there is insufficient consistency to ensure pupils' good progress through the school. Teachers are beginning to use progress-tracking information to target support for pupils who are underachieving. However, these measures are at an early stage and do not yet have full impact in helping to match work precisely to pupils' needs. The school therefore represents unsatisfactory value for money.

Improvement under the current leadership has been steady and in some areas rapid. The care, guidance and support of pupils and their personal development are satisfactory. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils behave well. There has been a significant improvement in behaviour and attendance in recent years. However, these improvements have yet to impact significantly on standards at the end of both key stages. The school has a clear grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. The leadership provided by the headteacher is impressive and the overall capacity of the school to improve is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- improving the consistency in the quality of teaching and learning
- ensuring that all pupils, irrespective of their ability, are challenged and supported realistically and that there are high expectations of what they can do and achieve
- encouraging teachers to be more creative in their planning and classroom practice in order that pupils' individual learning needs are met
- improving the accuracy and consistency of teacher assessments of pupils' progress and attainment
- extending the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Inspectors agree with the school's view that standards are broadly average but that achievement in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is inadequate. On entry to the school, pupils' attainment is average and they achieve well in the Foundation Stage, making considerable gains in learning and in their social development. In Years 1 and 2, learners' progress is inadequate and standards are average at the end of this key stage, with pupils attaining below expectations in writing. Girls outperform boys. Similarly, and as a result of staffing and teaching issues, achievement is inadequate across Key Stage 2; standards in English and mathematics are broadly average but standards are below average in tests at the end of Year 6, especially in science. However, inspection evidence demonstrates that the introduction by the leadership team of more challenging pupil targets and a range of strategies to promote higher levels of achievement are beginning to bear fruit, but they are not fully embedded in all years. Improved systems to track pupil progress are enabling teachers to identify underachievement more clearly and school initiatives, which focus on the quality of teaching and learning, are beginning to have a positive effect on pupil performance.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory overall, but is good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2. Spiritual development is satisfactory but is not promoted coherently across the curriculum. Pupils' social and moral development is good. They behave well and respect one another. There are very few exclusions from school. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory but the school recognises the need to strengthen its learners' awareness of multi-cultural issues.

Pupils are aware of the importance of following healthy lifestyles and are increasingly displaying this understanding in terms of choosing healthy food options and taking part in extracurricular sports. They feel safe in school and know adults they can turn to for help. Pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory and they are good when the teaching is effective. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through the active school council, the choir, visits to the elderly, charity fundraising and caring for younger pupils. Preparation for life after school is satisfactory and the Mathematics Week, with a focus on real-life money issues, the effective school council and a range of teamwork activities, contribute to learners' sense of community. However, underachievement in English and mathematics is a weakness in this area.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The school has placed considerable recent emphasis on developing effective lessons. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning has improved, is now satisfactory overall and there are examples of good practice. Teachers treat their pupils with the utmost dignity and respect and learners respond positively by behaving in a mature fashion. In the best lessons, a Year 6 literacy session on writing diaries for example, learners are fully engaged in the activities and respond positively to high levels of challenge. Similarly, pupils in a Year 4/5 English lesson benefited from opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and they researched aspects of a non-fiction text with a confidence which belied their years. As they said, 'we like this lesson because we can learn independently and help each other.' However, the school recognises that, in a significant number of lessons, pace drops, there is a need for realistic challenge and the lack of variety in activities leads to lower levels of pupil engagement. In these lessons, expectations of what pupils can achieve is often not high enough and individual learning needs are not met effectively. In many lessons, ICT is not used sufficiently as a teaching and learning tool. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good and children delight at participating in the well-chosen activities, which enhance their knowledge and skills.

Assessment is satisfactory but is not consistently implemented in all years. The best marking comprises detailed advice on how pupils may improve their work but this is not uniformly the case and some pupils are not aware of the levels at which they are operating.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. It matches the interests of all groups of pupils. Emphasis is placed on developing pupils' basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT. However, the skills gained in these subjects are not yet sufficiently applied and practised in other subjects. The practical curriculum in the Foundation Stage is being extended into Year 1 to ensure a smoother transition into the National Curriculum. The school has begun to seek ways to make learning more purposeful and enjoyable, although this is at an early stage of development. The curriculum is enriched by suitable educational and residential visits and by a range of extracurricular clubs, such as breakfast and after-school sessions. A range of enrichment activities, the Mathematics Week and European market for example, contribute to pupils' knowledge, understanding and enjoyment. However, curriculum development is hampered by a lack of resources, such as insufficient outdoor play facilities and little ICT in classrooms.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The care shown by the school for its pupils is good. There are effective arrangements for child protection and proper attention is paid to assessing risks in the curriculum and during visits, for example. As a result, pupils feel well cared for and safe. While care is good, there have been weaknesses in the monitoring of pupils' progress, including early intervention to tackle underachievement. Systems have been strengthened and there is now more frequent monitoring of pupils' performance and, therefore, more opportunities for timely support.

The arrangements for supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are unsatisfactory. While there are examples of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities making good or better progress, the overall achievement of this group is inadequate. However, in recent months, progress has been made in implementing sharper assessment procedures, better liaison with external agencies and more specific individual education plans.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory, with some good elements. Leadership by the headteacher is good. In a short time, her quiet but determined and effective leadership has transformed a school with serious behaviour problems into one where, in a safe and caring environment, sound learning can take place. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher. They form an effective partnership, which provides a clear vision for the school's future that is based on the desire to raise standards and improve achievement. This vision is shared and supported by all staff. Curriculum managers are beginning to have a positive impact in the areas for which they have responsibility. Governors have a perceptive grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and their support for the school is satisfactory. A range of well-founded initiatives and practices to improve the work of the school has been introduced, such as the Intensifying Support Programme elements of the curriculum, the arrangements for the monitoring of teaching and learning and the systems for tracking achievement. However, in this school, which is less than eighteen months old, insufficient time has passed to allow for the new measures to be consistently implemented and for them to impact sufficiently on standards and achievement. The leadership team knows precisely what needs to be done to move the school forward. The capacity for further improvement is, therefore, good.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all so much for welcoming us to your school and for being so kind, polite and friendly. We enjoyed our visit very much and want to tell you what we think about your school.

What we like most

- We are pleased that your teachers care for you and that they try hard to make sure that you know how to live a healthy life.
- We think you behave well, get on with each other and with your teachers, and that the school council does a lot to help younger pupils.
- We enjoyed the European market and we know that the Mathematics Week, too, helped you understand how to handle money.
- We think your headteacher and deputy headteacher know how to make your school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now

- We think your teachers should think of more different ways to help you learn, so that you can improve your work in English, mathematics and science.
- We believe that your teachers should challenge you to reach higher levels and that they should give you more advice on how you may improve your work.
- We think it would be good if you could use computers more in lessons.

We enjoyed talking to you and watching you learn. We wish you well for the future.