



Horwich Parish CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105233
Local Authority Bolton
Inspection number 287168
Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007
Reporting inspector George Crowther

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Horwich, Bolton
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire BL6 6AA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01204 333147
Number on roll (school)	398	Fax number	01204 333148
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Pritchard
		Headteacher	Mr A.R Beedie
Date of previous school inspection	5 March 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 13–14 February 2007	Inspection number 287168
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Horwich Parish is a large primary school whose social context is no more or less favourable than most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Pupils' attainment when they start school is above average overall, but varies from year to year. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds, and none is at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. It has made significant progress during the past year and many features of its work are improving rapidly. In 2005 and 2006, results in the Year 6 national tests fell. The headteacher, supported by the local authority, identified a number of weaknesses in teaching and learning which were holding back pupils' progress. Concerted action is bringing about improvement. By checking rigorously on the quality of learning, leaders have provided teachers with appropriate support and challenge to help them improve pupils' progress. For example, a greater focus on assessing pupils' attainment, and identifying targets for improvement, is raising the level of challenge in lessons. However, making sure work is well matched to help pupils take the next step in their learning is an area that is not yet done well enough.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception classes. The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting activities, and teaching is satisfactory, but the work sometimes lacks challenge, particularly for the more able. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress in the lessons where teachers use challenging, practical activities to stimulate pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Prior to recent improvements, progress in Years 3 to 6 was inadequate. Pupils are now making satisfactory progress, and good progress in some classes, but standards are still not as high as they should be. Throughout the school, teaching is often good, but too much is satisfactory and does not help pupils make rapid enough progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The school is a positive, friendly and very caring environment. As a result, pupils enjoy school, behave well and are keen to learn. A good range of experiences ensures that they know about being healthy and staying safe. They make a good contribution to the school community, often by carrying out extra responsibilities. They are thoughtful about the wider community, for example through their fundraising for charity. The current levels of basic skills in Year 6 are a sound preparation for the future. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and provides a good range of activities, which the pupils enjoy. Increasingly, the curriculum is becoming better matched to meet pupils' needs, so they can make the progress they are capable of.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is a determined leader. He has set out a very clear agenda for improving pupils' achievement, based on a perceptive evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The action taken is having a positive impact on pupils' progress, but has yet to reach a point where success can be measured fully. The senior management team supports improvements well, even though many are still quite new to their roles. The progress the school has already made demonstrates that it has a satisfactory capacity to take the next step in its improvement. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' achievement, particularly in Years 3 to 6
- Increase the proportion of lessons where teaching is good or better to tackle variations in the quality of pupils' learning
- Evaluate rigorously the measures taken to raise pupils' achievement to ensure that they are fully effective

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school with above average attainment, and by Year 6, have made satisfactory progress to reach similar standards. In the Reception classes, a wide range of experiences helps children to make satisfactory progress, but teaching is not always focused carefully enough to ensure that children take the next step in their learning. By the time they join Year 1 standards are above average. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress and they build their basic skills steadily. Standards in Year 2 have been consistently above average. Results in the 2006 Year 6 national tests were average. Even though this group contained more pupils who found learning challenging than is usual for the school, measures of progress since Year 2 showed that many had not done well enough, particularly in English. This led to strong and successful action to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Progress is now satisfactory and standards in Year 6 are above average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make similar progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school develops pupils' personal skills and positive attitudes to learning successfully. Pupils enjoy being at school. One pupil spoke for many when he said 'I like lessons because there's lots of different things to do and that's fun.' Pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. Relationships are good and pupils like helping others. A typical comment was 'I like being a play leader because it helps Year 1 children to have fun.' Good relationships also help pupils to work together well in lessons. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. For example, a link with a parish in Namibia increases their understanding of themselves and their place in the wider world. Pupils understand how to take care of themselves. They know that exercise and eating the right things are important for good health. They feel safe in school because as they say, 'There's always an adult around to help you if you need it.' They make good contributions to the school community through taking on extra responsibilities. For example, the school council gives pupils a valuable voice in school matters.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Lessons are planned carefully and what pupils are intended to learn is usually shared clearly with them. Where teaching is good, the intended learning is a strong feature throughout the lesson and keeps pupils focused on their work. Good relationships and plenty of praise for success are strong features of all lessons. Whole-class sessions are invariably lively and interesting, and this captures and holds the pupils' attention. Occasionally, however, they last too long, which leaves too little time for pupils to complete their independent work. In some lessons, the tasks pupils are given are not challenging enough, particularly for the more able pupils. The school has good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. As yet, however, teachers are not using this information sufficiently to improve learning, and so work is not always best matched to pupils' needs. Setting targets to improve pupils' skills is beginning to be used effectively.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has a wide range of interesting experiences which support pupils' learning effectively. For some pupils, however, work in English and mathematics does not meet their needs fully because it is insufficiently challenging. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities helps them to play a full part in all activities. Improved planning is ensuring that pupils' skills are developed through work in a variety of subjects. For example, by Year 6, pupils reach above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) because they use and develop their skills across many subjects. Additional activities enrich the curriculum, including French, the school production and visits to places such as the Lowry Theatre. A wide range of activities outside lessons, well attended by pupils, add greatly to their enjoyment of school. The good programme for personal, social and health education plays a strong part in nurturing pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Levels of care are good and are supported strongly by good relationships between all members of the school community. A typical comment was 'I like the teachers because they always help if you've got a problem.' As a result, pupils feel safe, secure and confident to express their views and concerns to adults. Staff know pupils very well and treat them as individuals. Parents are very positive about the friendly care provided. The Year 6 play leaders do a good job in working with younger pupils and dealing with any anxieties. Staff implement effectively the good procedures for safeguarding pupils from harm. Academic guidance is satisfactory and improving. Pupils have learning targets which

help them to improve their work, and older pupils are involved in assessing their progress against them. It is too early, however, to evaluate the impact of this recent initiative on pupils' achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has led the school successfully through a difficult period of change when it has had to look hard at its strengths and weaknesses. Since his appointment two years ago, staff changes and a fall in standards in Year 6 necessitated challenging management decisions. It has taken considerable determination and vision to steady the ship and guide it in the right direction. The school's self-evaluation of its performance is frank and accurate. It is very clear about the aspects of the school's work that are not good enough. Plans for improvement are rigorous and are shared with the school community. Although there is already evidence that pupils' achievement is beginning to improve, most initiatives are partly completed and the school has not yet evaluated their full impact on pupils' achievement. Procedures for checking on pupils' progress have improved rapidly since the appointment of the deputy headteacher, who leads this aspect of the school's work effectively. Leaders and class teachers are now well aware of pupils who may be in danger of underachieving. Governors bring a wide range of skills to their roles. They have been fully involved in helping the school to improve and are very clear about what still needs to be done. The school is largely successful in ensuring that all pupils are fully involved in learning and school life, whatever their background, ability or particular needs.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when we visited your school to find out how well you are doing. Your school provides you with a satisfactory education. There are lots of good things about your school, but we also found some ways in which it could be even better. The strengths we found are:

- everyone gets on well together and the older children help the younger ones
- there are lots of interesting things to do in lessons and you say they are fun
- the progress you are making is improving because you try hard to do your best work
- there are many interesting clubs and activities, such as ICT and dance
- everyone we met was polite, friendly and well behaved
- the school council is doing a good job
- you have a good understanding about being healthy
- special jobs for the older pupils are an enjoyable way of helping everyone in school
- lots of your good work is on display around the school
- you like the way the staff take care to make sure you are safe and happy.

We would like you to work with your teachers to improve the way you learn.

- We think you could be doing even better in some aspects of your work, particularly the children in Years 3 to 6. We have asked your teachers to make sure the work they give you helps you to learn quickly. You must try hard to do well.
 - In some lessons, the work your teachers give you is not helping you to make good enough progress. Sometimes it's too easy or sometimes you do not finish the work you've been given. We have asked your teachers to make sure the work is challenging so you can make good progress. You will have to rise to the challenge.
 - Your school is trying new ways of helping you to learn quickly, such as the targets you have in English and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to make sure that when they try a new idea, they make sure it really helps you to learn quickly.

Thank you for helping me with the inspection of your school.