

Healey Foundation Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105850
Local Authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	287351
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Brenda McIntosh

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Bray
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Taylor
Date of previous school inspection	25 November 2002
School address	Earnshaw Avenue Rochdale Lancashire OL12 0ST
Telephone number	01706 522770
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Healey Foundation is an average sized primary school. It serves a community of mixed social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The majority of pupils are from a White British background. A broadly average proportion of pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is considerable mobility out of the school in Years 5 and 6 when a significant number of pupils transfer to catchment areas which have increased priority for gaining a place at a grammar school of their choice in a neighbouring local authority.

The school has received a Healthy Schools award and a Sports Activemark for extra-curricular activities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It provides pupils with a very varied and interesting education, enabling them to move on to secondary school as very confident, and socially and academically adept young people. Although pupils in Year 6 are looking forward to the next phase in their lives, they say 'We will be sad to leave because we will miss our teachers and friends'. Pupils in Year 2 are equally ready and prepared to move on and they became quite animated when talking about all the additional activities they have to look forward to in Year 3. The overwhelming majority of parents are extremely positive in their views about the school and all it provides for their children. They comment on how they feel the school gives their children an excellent start in life and helps them to gain a wealth of knowledge in all areas of the curriculum.

Children get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage (Reception) and make good progress in all the areas of learning. Standards are above average by the end of Year 2, from broadly average starting points in the Reception class. The significant number of higher-attaining pupils leaving the school in Years 5 and 6 adversely affects the test results at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards therefore vary from year to year. In 2006 at the end of Year 6 standards were average. The unpublished results for 2007 for the current Year 6 indicate an improvement in English, mathematics and science. More importantly, all pupils make good progress from their relative starting points and achieve well during their time in school. Performance is generally better in English and mathematics than in science. Pupils have too few opportunities to carry out practical scientific investigations and this limits their achievement in this subject.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are good. Although there is firm emphasis upon teaching basic skills, there is also a strong commitment to providing a wide range of learning opportunities in other subjects. The links made between subjects add richness to pupils' learning. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and ensure that learning experiences are diverse, relevant and interesting. As a result, pupils are highly motivated, enjoy learning and achieve well. There is room for improvement in teachers' marking. Although work is marked regularly, pupils do not receive clear guidance on how to improve their work. The school is very well regarded in the community for its high standards in music, drama, physical education and pupils' behaviour. Pupils are respected participants in national and local music festivals and a whole range of out-of-school activities and competitions.

Excellent partnerships with schools, colleges and sports clubs further enrich the curriculum. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are significantly enhanced through the use of sophisticated software available to them on computers at the city learning centre. Pupils are becoming quite skilful in using ICT to support their learning in other subjects. Since the last inspection, ICT has played a major part in improving the curriculum for design and technology. The range of skills that pupils are developing is preparing them very well for their futures in a world of increasing digital technology.

A high level of mutual respect and excellent relationships underpin pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Pupils are alert and take a lively interest in their school; they are proud of their achievements. They develop a sense of value gained from contributing to a community, for example, through making decisions as school councillors and taking on various monitoring and supportive roles such as playground pals. They have a very good awareness of healthy lifestyles and a mature appreciation of those less fortunate than themselves.

Leadership and management are good. The school has a very calm, welcoming atmosphere. Staff show high levels of concern to ensure that all pupils feel safe and valued and are included in all aspects of school life. Self-evaluation is accurate and gives the school a clear understanding of what works well and where it could do better. As yet, however, the recently improved tracking system is not used with sufficient rigour to raise achievement further. Governors are actively involved in school life and have contributed to the good improvements since the last inspection. They give a good steer to managing the finances to ensure that the school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Plan more regular opportunities for pupils to carry out practical scientific investigations to raise achievement.
- Improve teachers' marking so that pupils know how to improve their work.
- Use tracking information more rigorously to improve pupils' good achievement further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's skills on entry to Reception are broadly average overall but they are below average in aspects of language and calculation. They make good progress

to reach above average standards by the end of Year 2. The school does not entirely gain from this advantageous position because of the significant number of higher-attaining pupils who leave during Key Stage 2, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The test results for each cohort at the end of Year 6 are adversely affected because of this. In 2006, standards at the end of Year 6 were average in English, mathematics and science. In the current Year 6, the most recent test results indicate an improvement in all three subjects for this cohort. The school's data show that individual pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve well. Progress in science lags a little behind that in English and mathematics. This is because pupils do not get enough opportunities to apply their scientific knowledge in carrying out practical investigations. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good quality, focused support they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Attendance is consistently higher than average, which reflects pupils' great enjoyment of school. In Reception, children quickly adapt to school routines, and the pattern of excellent behaviour is established from an early stage. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. High expectations of pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work make the school a very calm and pleasant place in which to learn. Pupils feel free from intimidation and say bullying is very rare. Their behaviour is exemplary and they get much enjoyment out of learning and participating in all the extra activities the school offers them. In lessons, pupils are highly motivated and develop very good work habits. They answer and ask relevant questions with confidence. Pupils gain a strong cultural awareness, for example, through art, history and music. They make excellent use of the local environment and historical events to inspire their artwork; this results in high quality work which reflects real feelings and emotions. Pupils eat healthily and have a very good understanding of the importance of exercise. They learn about 'Working for a living' and experience first hand the benefits of ICT in the workplace and how it helps their learning in a range of subjects. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Most lessons are interesting and enjoyable with regular opportunities for pupils to collaborate and work in groups, independently of the teacher. The frequent use of 'paired discussions' encourages pupils to share their ideas and learn from each other.

Pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn because teachers regularly refer to the learning objectives. Behaviour is managed positively and unobtrusively. Excellent relationships in all lessons result in pupils having the confidence to express their thoughts and feelings. Pupils' willingness to contribute to discussions helps to develop their speaking skills. In the less effective lessons, the whole-class teaching sessions do not always engage pupils as well as they could because they are not planned well enough to meet the needs of all abilities. Teaching assistants are usually deployed well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, either in lessons or in small groups outside the classroom. Occasionally, too little is expected of pupils, and as a result the benefit to their learning is then reduced. Homework is used well to enable pupils to consolidate or extend their knowledge and understanding of the work done in the classroom.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is rich and promotes pupils' good academic achievement and outstanding personal development. Pupils' achievement in science is limited because the curriculum is not planned well enough to provide sufficient regular opportunities for pupils to carry out practical scientific investigations. The expertise of staff is maximised to provide good quality learning experiences and to promote good achievement, for example, through specialist teaching in music, physical education and ICT. The enrichment of learning through a wide range of clubs, partnerships, visits and visitors into school is an outstanding feature. Music has a strong tradition in school, leading to many pupils learning to play a musical instrument, joining choirs and taking part in performances both nationally and locally. Leading healthy lifestyles and keeping safe are given strong attention through personal, social and health education. Pupils have many opportunities to discuss sensitive issues and gain an understanding of making choices to help them keep safe and healthy. Pupils' natural talents and abilities are developed well through a range of opportunities, for example, in sport, music and art.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils are very well cared for and, as a result, are very happy in school and are able to concentrate on their learning and make good progress. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure health and safety, child protection and safe recruitment of staff. Pupils are confident that their teachers will help them to sort out any problems quickly should they occur. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified from a very early stage and provided with timely support to ensure that they have full access to the curriculum and make good progress. Teachers' marking is regular and positive, but it does not always offer clear guidance that tells pupils exactly what to do to improve their work. The school actively encourages parents to become involved in their children's learning.

Induction and transfer programmes are well thought out to help children settle into Reception, and to make a smooth transfer to Year 1 and then at the end of Year 6 to secondary education.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets a clear direction for improvement. Leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, share her vision to provide the best for all pupils. A strong team spirit is evident and staff work very well together. The staff are very willing to draw on each other's strengths to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They are deployed effectively to teach their subject specialism and this impacts positively on pupils' achievement and enjoyment of learning. The monitoring of performance is good and identifies accurately the school's strengths and the areas for improvement. The system for tracking pupils' progress has recently been improved but the information is not yet used rigorously enough to raise achievement even further. The school has developed some excellent partnerships which significantly enrich pupils' learning experiences and contribute to their all-round achievement. Governors provide good support and challenge to the school. Training for staff is up to date to help provide a good and varied education for the pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently to find out how well you are doing with your work. You are all very polite and friendly. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you liked best. We came to the same conclusions as you: that your school is good and gives you a good education. I particularly liked the way you work so hard in lessons and how you get on so well with each other. Your artwork is very impressive and the T-shirts some of you have designed at the city learning centre are first rate. You have very good access to computer programmes which enable you to use your ICT skills to help you with your learning in other subjects.

Your teachers make lessons enjoyable and this helps you to learn. Staff take very good care of you and want you to do well. Your behaviour is outstanding both in class and around school. You have many exciting activities to take part in. It is good to see that so many of you represent your school in festivals and competitions.

It is also our job to point out what schools should do to improve and make things better for the pupils. I have listed the things that I have asked the headteacher and other adults to do to help you do as well as you can.

- Provide regular opportunities for you to carry out practical scientific investigations to help you achieve more in science.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your work they tell you clearly how to improve it and help you do your best.
- Make better use of the information they have about how well you are doing with your work to help you make even better progress in the future.

You can help by continuing to work hard and trying your best at all times. Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We wish you every success in the future.