



Hudson Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104869
Local Authority Sefton
Inspection number 294510
Inspection dates 12–13 December 2006
Reporting inspector Michael McIlroy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Moorhey Road
School category	Community		Maghull, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–11		Merseyside L31 5LE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 5261568
Number on roll (school)	167	Fax number	0151 5200616
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs T Boileau
		Headteacher	Miss Charlotte Allen
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2005		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	12–13 December 2006	294510

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school serves an area which enjoys average levels of prosperity. It is smaller than average and almost all pupils are White British. About a tenth of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. In recent years the school has experienced considerable changes in staffing and leadership.

The school holds the Activemark Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Following the inspection in November 2005 the school was judged to require improvement in relation to standards and achievement. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that it is now a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils enter the school with average skill and learning levels and make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in Key Stage 1 where standards overall are above average. In previous years the rate of learning had slowed in Key Stage 2 and pupils did not make as much progress as they should have. The most recent national assessments for Key Stage 2 pupils indicate that this trend has been reversed. Standards rose strongly in English, and pupils' performance in science was particularly pleasing. However, in spite of improved standards in mathematics, performance in this subject remain a concern for the school.

Results for more able pupils dipped slightly in English, rose in mathematics and almost doubled in science. The improvement in standards is due to the school's introduction of effective assessment procedures which identified the underperformance of pupils. This information was well used to provide extra lessons for those who had fallen behind. Strong support from the local authority (LA) and a carefully focused training programme to extend teachers' skills also contributed to this improvement in standards.

Leadership and management are now satisfactory overall. The new governing body is effective and its support for school managers has ensured continuity in leadership. The greater stability in leadership has allowed the school to consolidate the successful initiatives introduced since the last inspection. The recently appointed headteacher provides clear direction for the school and is fully dedicated to its continued improvement. She knows its strengths and weaknesses well and has moved swiftly and resolutely to tackle underperformance, building on the effective work of the previous acting headteacher. Last year's improvements in assessment have been extended in order to identify underachievement earlier. New measures to improve learning and behaviour have been introduced. Leadership at other levels in the school, such as subject leadership, is satisfactory.

The good personal development and well-being of pupils have enabled them to respond well to the new initiatives and changes. This is also reflected in their enjoyment of school, above average attendance and the good contribution they make to the school community. Behaviour is satisfactory and is improving following the introduction of the school's 'golden rules.' The curriculum is satisfactory. It has helped to raise standards through an appropriate focus on the core subjects, supported by a new homework policy. The care and support that pupils receive are good and are based on the good level of trust that exists between adults and learners. Increasingly good academic guidance means that pupils know what it is they have to do to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants and make satisfactory progress. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some

of it is good. Teachers have readily applied new initiatives and consequently pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making satisfactory progress overall. However, work is not always matched to pupils' abilities and not all of the more able pupils are fully challenged.

Parents who returned questionnaires overwhelmingly support the work of the school and commend its recent improvements, including their greater involvement in children's learning. In the light of the greater stability in the school's leadership and the improvement in standards at Key Stage 2, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further and offers adequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Increase the proportion of good teaching.
- Further strengthen management by developing the role of subject leaders.
- Ensure that the more able pupils are provided with challenging work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Pupils enter the school with standards in learning and skills expected for their age group. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress due to good teaching. In 2005, pupils' attainment was above average overall. Results from the most recent assessments for seven-year-olds indicate that these standards have been maintained. At Key Stage 2 the attainment of pupils declined steadily from 2003 until 2005 when standards in mathematics and science were significantly below average. Pupils performed least well in mathematics. The progress made by pupils in their learning was below average in 2004 and further declined to be well below average in 2005. Pupils made least progress in science and mathematics. All groups of pupils made below average progress.

The hard work of the school since the previous inspection has begun to pay dividends. The most recent assessments for Year 6 pupils show that standards rose strongly in English, mathematics and science. Pupils performed most strongly in science. Although results in mathematics improved, they lag behind results in other subjects. Results for the most able pupils also rose in mathematics and particularly so in science. English results declined slightly at this higher level. Inspection evidence indicates that the better use of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are leading to improved teaching and learning. Consequently, pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good spiritual and moral development is underpinned by the school's caring values. Good social and cultural development is equally evident. Building on sound

beginnings in the Foundation Stage pupils enjoy an orderly environment and sharing responsibilities such as school council membership, stage productions and looking after younger pupils.

Pupils gain confidence in an atmosphere of trust and respect, learning to articulate personal feelings and concerns in lessons and circle time. Most display positive attitudes, good humour and courtesy, although some disruptive behaviour is causing concern. This is being tackled by the school. Pupils enjoy school and this is widely evident in their enthusiasm for learning, energetic play and busy involvement in extra-curricular activities. Attendance is good, as is punctuality. Pupils feel safe in school, are largely free from bullying and enjoy mature, constructive relations with adults. Many gain pleasure and satisfaction from projects concerned with fundraising, healthy living and providing entertainment for senior citizens.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall and some of it is good. Resources, including interactive whiteboards, are well used and teaching assistants are satisfactorily deployed to support learners. Pupils know what they have to do and questioning is often used skilfully. However, too often the pace of learning in lessons is not fast enough. Introductory sessions are often lengthy. Pupils are patient but passive listeners for too long, which leads to some pupils losing concentration and achieving less well. Work is not always matched to the different levels of abilities of pupils, particularly the more able. In the most successful lessons, opening sessions are used to set specific and challenging targets. Teaching is stimulating and lively. The pace of learning is brisk and there is a good balance of teacher-led and independent activities that keeps pupils busy and productive.

The school's recent programme of training, begun with the help of the LA, is improving the quality of teaching styles. The development of a wide-ranging series of assessment methods is evident in lessons and in pupils' books. These innovations in assessment are increasingly effective. Pupils' achievement is increasing due to the accuracy of their teachers' setting of targets, quality of marking and detailed analysis of accumulated data.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and meets statutory requirements. There is an appropriate focus on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Provision in these subjects is supported by extra lessons to help pupils who have fallen behind in their learning. These have contributed to the recent improvement in standards. Pupils' understanding of information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactorily developed. Learning is supported by an adequate level of homework.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in learning, partly due to the support of teaching assistants. Some opportunities exist for stretching more able pupils, such as links with a local secondary school. Learning is enriched by a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, including football, dance, choir and 'board game' clubs. Visits are made to local museums and older pupils take part in a residential visit. Theme events, such as the 'Egyptian Day' and the 'Victorian Day' enhance learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a secure and healthy working environment. It cares very well for its pupils. Learners are closely supervised both in and around school and detailed risk assessments are conducted when needed. Well-considered child protection procedures ensure pupils' welfare and safety. Good induction procedures exist for new pupils. Older learners are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Teaching staff keep good records of pupils' achievements while continuously seeking ways of supporting them further. Pupils and parents gain from helpful advice on learners' current progress and the subsequent, next steps in learning. Teachers increasingly promote independent learning, to enable pupils to take and demonstrate responsibility for what they do.

Pupils relate well to adults in school. Teachers and their assistants are sensitive to pupils' feelings and anxieties. They take particular care to include all pupils in every aspect of school life. They respond to individual needs of pupils, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good links exist with external agencies.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Although only in post for a short time, the new headteacher provides clear direction for the school and is fully committed to its continued improvement. She has high expectations and is resolutely focused on raising standards. Her evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate. She has worked hard in continuing the school's work in remedying the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection. Effective assessment procedures have been further improved so that underperformance can be identified earlier. More whole-school strategies, such as 'target groups', have been introduced to accelerate the pace of learning. Arrangements for the statutory performance management of teachers are linked carefully to improving achievement. Further steps have been taken to strengthen leadership through the recent appointment of a deputy headteacher. Middle management is satisfactory. The qualified teacher in the Foundation Stage and inclusion coordinator provide sound leadership as do subject leaders. The monitoring of pupils' work and of teaching by subject leaders is inconsistent, but their skills are being developed in collaboration with the LA.

The school has improved links with parents, who appreciate the greater involvement they have in their children's education. They are consulted on developments, such as the new homework policy. Parents wholeheartedly support the work of the school and the stronger focus on standards. Some would like more information on its work.

Governance is good. Following the reconstitution of the governing body after the last inspection report, governors have been instrumental in ensuring stability in the school's leadership and that the school's drive for improvement continues. They are well informed about its work and hold it to account. They provide challenge and support for the headteacher and are forging links with parents. Finances are well administered.

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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?	3
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	3
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	3
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?	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.

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	3
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for being so helpful and polite when we inspected your school recently. I am writing to let you know what we found.

Some of the best things which we saw were:

- you enjoy school and your attendance is good
- you have a great range of clubs to take part in
- you are well cared for by your teachers and other staff
- you make a good contribution to your local community
- you know how to stay healthy and safe.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to make some changes in order to make the school better. These are:

- to see that more of you do better in mathematics
- to make all teaching as good as the best which we saw
- to provide more training for teachers to help them do the jobs they do outside the classroom
- to make sure that some of you are given harder work.

Once again, many thanks for being so helpful during our recent visit to your school.