

Little Hoole Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119156
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313200
Inspection date	15 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	223
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Steven Hughes
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Foster
Date of previous school inspection	1 February 2005
School address	Dob Lane Walmer Bridge Preston Lancashire PR4 5QL
Telephone number	01772 613026
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: achievement, standards, teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and both key stages, especially in mathematics; pupil's attitudes and behaviour; the breadth of the curriculum in meeting all pupils' needs; enrichment activities; health and safety and safeguarding procedures; and the quality and impact of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from: observations, assessment data, records and documents including the school's self-evaluation, parents' replies to the questionnaires and discussions with staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This average size primary school is situated in a semi-rural area close to Preston in Lancashire. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is well below average and the vast majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Extended care services include nursery facilities as well as before- and after-school and holiday clubs, operated by an independent provider. During the inspection an acting headteacher was in post. A substantive headteacher had been appointed and was due to take up post at the start of the new term.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Little Hoole Primary is a good school with outstanding features. It provides good value for money. Parents have positive views of the school and one described it as a place where 'children grow in self-esteem'. They praise the teachers who they say are 'committed and approachable' and the wide range of activities on offer. A strong sense of pride in the school is shared between adults and pupils and it has a very good reputation within the local area. Parents play an active part in their children's education. They organise social and community events and raise substantial funds for additional resources. The help that they provide for the daily reading programme is highly valued by staff.

Achievement is good. Most start in Year 1 with standards that are slightly higher than is expected for their age. Current standards for Year 2 are above average, as they have been in most previous years. Teachers' assessments were lower in 2007 because a significant number of pupils had started school with lower levels of development than is usual and needed much support with personal development. Standards are significantly above average by Year 6 in English and science and above average in mathematics. In Key Stage 2, achievement in English and science is particularly good with a high percentage of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age. Writing has been much improved and is now a strength. Results of national tests show that in mathematics, achievement was satisfactory in 2007, largely because some pupils missed the higher level by a small margin. Tracking records show better progress this year but there has been insufficient time for improvements to make an impact on test results. Pupils who have learning or emotional difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well from their starting points and meet their personal targets.

Pupils learn well because the quality of teaching is good. Pupils' work is assessed regularly and tasks are planned carefully to cater for their differing abilities. Special tuition groups help pupils who are not meeting their teachers' expectations. This acts as a good safety net and is a major factor underpinning the pupils' good achievement. The more able pupils often have additional challenge but there are still a few occasions, especially in mathematics, when they are doing the same work as the majority. This slows their progress to some extent. Well trained teaching assistants guide and encourage pupils, thus enabling all to succeed. Some expert teaching for design and technology, French and information and communication technology (ICT) leads to work of a very good standard. Teachers give good academic guidance for pupils through helpful comments in marking and personal targets which clearly indicate what needs improving. These useful systems are not extended to science as yet. Across the subjects, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their progress and develop their own goals; this promotes good independent learning.

The outstanding curriculum provides a balance in developing pupils' creative, practical and academic skills. Lessons include extensive opportunities to use ICT, engage in independent research and to write in a range of styles. Visits and expert visitors enrich the curriculum and inject excitement into learning. Key Stage 2 pupils especially value the outdoor residential pursuits. Links with other schools and agencies provide enhancement for pupils' learning. For example, a schools sports partnership provides coaching for pupils in a wide range of physical activities and many specialists support the music, drama and dance programme. This leads to some very good learning in physical and creative work and the performing arts.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding: it is supported extremely well by an extensive programme of personal education and a good reward system. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is exemplary. They have excellent, trusting relationships with their teachers and this helps them to grow into confident learners. Meticulous attention is given to pastoral support. Safeguarding procedures meet all requirements. As a result, pupils feel secure and say that adults in school are always on hand to listen and help. Pupils have an excellent awareness of healthy living and are proud of their Healthy Schools award. They carry out a wide range of responsibilities within school. For example, they provide technical support during the daily act of worship and Year 6 pupils organise their own fund-raising activities. The elected school council members represent pupils' interests well and have contributed fresh ideas for the redevelopment of the school grounds. These opportunities, together with a very good level of basic skills, ensure that pupils are extremely well prepared for their future lives.

Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have developed effective systems to monitor the school's work and set challenging targets. The annual process of checking provision and performance is thorough but some evaluations are over-optimistic because they do not take enough account of pupils' progress. Nevertheless, the development plan shows that managers identify and act upon the most important areas for improvement. The plan is a useful document although some of the expected outcomes are too general and do not provide a measurable target. This makes it difficult to evaluate any successes, especially for the governors. The school has come through a period of change very well. The acting headteacher, ably supported by the senior manager, provides good leadership and has ensured that strengths have been maintained. Teamwork is strong and everyone is committed to achieving high standards. The school has good capacity to improve further. Governors underpin the leadership and management of the school very well. They keep a critical eye on provision and achievement and are actively involved in steering the school forwards.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join the Reception class, their development is just above that typical for the age group. Pre-school visits, together with very good introduction arrangements, ensure that children settle quickly. Those who attend the attached nursery are familiar with staff and routines, so they make a seamless transition into school life. Children make good progress and a flying start to their education in the Reception class. On entry to Year 1, most have exceeded national expectations.

Teaching is good. Staff carefully guide each individual along the steps of learning through a wide range of teacher-led tasks. The bright, stimulating environment is well organised to provide a very interesting selection of independent activities, allowing children to practise and consolidate their new knowledge and skills. Behaviour is excellent; children thoroughly enjoy their work and collaborate well. Leadership and management are good and have resulted in good improvements to resources and the breadth of activities. In striving for excellence, the manager now has plans to cover part of the outdoor classroom in order to extend the scope of this provision in all weathers.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide consistently challenging work for the more able pupils in mathematics.

- Evaluate provision taking full account of pupils' progress and set targets for school improvement that are clear and measurable.

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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?	1
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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

16 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Little Hoole Primary School, Lancashire, PR4 5QL

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I thoroughly enjoyed my day. I appreciated all the help you gave me and the interesting conversations we had. In return, I would like to tell you what I found out.

Little Hoole Primary is a good school and some parts are excellent. I was impressed with your excellent behaviour, the efforts you put into your work, and your friendliness. You get on extremely well together and take very good care of each other. You are a credit to your school and families. Your school council members ensure that your views are taken into account. I think the trim trail and galleon for the Key Stage 1 play area were good ideas and are used very well. I think you are developing into good citizens. You do a good job in raising money for charities and your recycling work is helping to create a better environment for us all.

The school is a safe and happy place. You told me how much you enjoy events, trips and clubs so you must be very busy people. You told me that bullying is not an issue at school and that 'there's always someone who will help with little fall-outs'. I haven't space to list all the 'favourite things about school' that you talked about. I think your feelings are summed up by the person who said 'We look forward to coming every day.'

You are keen to learn and are making good progress. You are making super progress in writing. Well done! I think you could do as well in mathematics and your school will be looking at providing harder work for those of you who like a challenge. Your school will also be considering ways of checking on how well things are going in school and setting precise targets for improvements, wherever necessary.

Thank you once again for the interesting conversations I had and for letting me share your day. There is a great deal about your school of which you and the staff should be very proud. Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Lynne Read

Lead inspector