

# Halton Lodge Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111229
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	325322
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Stephen Rowland

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	188
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Chris Culleton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gaynor Dickson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Grangeway Runcorn Cheshire WA7 5LU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 564053
<b>Fax number</b>	01928 574865

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school serving an area of significant social disadvantage. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is nearly twice the national average. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average. Many children enter the school with skills below those expected for their age. The school has a number of awards including Artsmark Gold and Activemark, it is also an accredited Healthy School and holds the Global Citizenship and Young Enterprise awards. The school also has a creative partnership. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Reception class.

## 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 and improving school, with many outstanding features. The school's motto is 'Happy Learning Promotes Success' and pupils make good progress because of the stimulating and challenging curriculum offered to them, and because of the strong sense of engagement and enjoyment evident in most lessons. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of loyalty to the school, often stating how much they enjoy their lessons and other activities in which they participate. Partnerships with parents and with the local community are particularly strong. Parents express overwhelming support for the school. A typical comment is 'I think the school and its excellent teachers do a fabulous job.'

Many children start in the Reception class with skills which are below those expected for their age. Communication, language and social skills are particularly low. They make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress in Key Stage 1, usually reaching standards which are close to the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2, in spite of a high level of pupil mobility, progress remains good and most pupils achieve well, reaching above-average standards by the time they leave. The standards in writing are not quite as strong in all key stages and the school is working hard to tackle this. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good with many examples of outstanding practice. Lessons are lively and engaging, with a strong sense of purpose and pace. A rich variety of learning experiences is offered to pupils, both in lesson time and during the many extra-curricular activities. In many lessons, pupils are used to assessing their own work and the work of their classmates, although this approach is not applied consistently throughout the school.

Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are polite and considerate and are very aware of the impact their actions have on others. There is an active school council, which is particularly proud of its achievements, such as the installation of water fountains in the play areas. There are numerous links within the local community, a very productive partnership with a more ethnically-diverse school in Rochdale and a strong link with a Transfiguration Primary School, Owerri, Nigeria. These partnerships allow the pupils to develop into individuals who are sensitive to the needs of others both locally and in the wider world. This is also a healthy school. Many pupils take part in the daily 'Wake and Shake' sessions and are ready to talk about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides energetic and committed leadership for the school. She is supported ably by an experienced and capable team of senior leaders who share a common sense of direction and purpose. Governors have a good understanding of the school and provide effective challenge and support. These factors have enabled the school to make significant improvements since the previous inspection. The stimulating and innovative curriculum and excellent care and support for pupils, along with good and improving standards of academic attainment, show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress and achieve well. When children enter the Reception class, their skills are below those typical for their age and are well below in their personal, social and emotional

development and in their language, literacy and communication skills. By the time they transfer to Year 1, most reach the nationally expected standards, although their skills in writing are not as strong as in other areas of learning. Children make a good start in their reading because of strategies such as the emphasis on linking letters and sounds. Opportunities to develop early writing skills are growing.

There is a good balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, occasionally, adults do not extend children's learning when activities have been self-chosen and progress slows as a consequence. Provision for extended activities and learning outside is well-planned. However, there are insufficient wheeled toys and this means that sometimes children have to wait too long for their turn.

The good deployment of staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures a very high level of care. Key carers develop strong and trusting relationships with the children and their parents and carers. They play and cooperate well and grow in confidence. Their behaviour is excellent.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed well and, as a result, teamwork is very strong. Assessment is good. Careful observations are made and used well to plan the next steps in children's learning. There is a very strong emphasis on the teaching of social and listening skills and this lays a secure foundation for children's future learning and development.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in writing throughout the school.
- Extend pupils' involvement in assessing their own progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good overall across Key Stages 1 and 2, building upon the good start children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As a result of good teaching, most pupils make good progress and meet the challenging targets set for them by the end of Key Stage 1. There has been a trend of improving progress over recent years, although achievement in writing is not as strong as in other areas. This picture continues into Key Stage 2, with most pupils making good progress and reaching above average standards. In 2008, the school's challenging targets were exceeded and the proportion of pupils reaching Level 5 increased significantly. Boys and girls performed equally well. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved as well as their peers because of the outstanding care and support they receive. Performance in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science was equally good.

Improvement has been secured through a determined drive to provide focused support for each individual. Staff continue to work hard to share good practice and to continue to raise standards. The school's own detailed monitoring system, relating to the progress of pupils currently on role, shows that the improving trend is being maintained.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The varied links with schools at home and abroad contribute to pupils' extremely good understanding of traditions and cultures other than their own. This is reflected in the Global Citizenship award the school has received. Behaviour in class and around the school is excellent. Pupils learn self-discipline and

are extremely helpful and considerate. Pupils speak knowledgeably about the need for regular exercise and the benefits of a healthy diet. Enjoyment of school and of learning is reflected in the very high level of attendance, which is well-above average. Pupils get on well together and cooperate very well with partners and in groups. They make an excellent contribution to the school, local and wider communities, through, for example, the school council, eco committee', carol singing, dance performances in the community and fundraising for the Transfiguration Primary School, Owerri, Nigeria. Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and learn to respect and value others due to the caring ethos of the school, in which they feel valued. Pupils develop a good understanding of the world of work through, for example, the Year 6 Careers Day. By the time they leave school, they are mature young citizens who are well-prepared for the next stage of education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Since the previous inspection, the school has made a determined effort to eliminate any inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good, with many examples of outstanding practice. Planning is thorough and lessons have a lively pace, which keeps pupils engaged. Questioning is skilfully employed to consolidate learning and to challenge pupils to extend their understanding. Pupils frequently work in groups or in pairs as 'talking partners', so that they can discuss ideas and how best to answer questions or to complete tasks. In most lessons, pupils are encouraged to assess their own and other pupils' work and this enables them to develop their social, speaking and listening skills, but occasionally, learning is not quite as effective because pupils have less opportunity to do so. Marking is generally good, with helpful and supportive comments, which ensure pupils understand what they need to do to make further progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is rich, vibrant and imaginative. The school links subjects together within themes. This is organised very carefully, with strong emphasis on the development of pupils' key skills and knowledge. There are many opportunities for pupils to gain practical experiences when learning. Revisions to the curriculum are contributing to the steady rise in standards by the end of Year 6. For example, initiatives such as those which help pupils to link letters and sounds are having a positive impact on standards in reading. Pupils comment positively about how they enjoy the many practical activities on offer. For example, they build a model lighthouse in design technology and learn about the 'Great Fire of London' through role-play. There is an excellent emphasis on citizenship and on personal, emotional and health education. This supports pupils' outstanding personal development. The curriculum is well-adapted for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make good progress as a result. The use of specialist teachers for drama, art and music has a very positive impact on the richness of experiences offered to pupils. Extra-curricular provision is outstanding, with an impressive range of activities and visits. Pupils enjoy the residential trips particularly, to Llandudno, Fox Howl and Kingswood.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Levels of care and support are outstanding throughout the school. All adults know their pupils very well and make a positive contribution to ensuring that they are safe, happy and enjoy their time in school. The school assesses the needs of pupils with learning difficulties thoroughly and provides very effective support for them. Child protection and statutory safeguarding requirements are fully-met and meet government requirements. Arrangements for health and safety, welfare and for meeting pupils' medical needs are excellent. There is extremely good guidance for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are most in need of additional support. An extensive range of external agencies provides excellent support, which often extends to children's families. The school works very hard to involve parents in their children's education and, as a consequence, parents hold the school in high regard.

Academic guidance is very good. This is because monitoring information is detailed and effective and also because relationships are very strong and pupils are willing to ask for support when they need it. Pupils state that teachers are always willing to help them with their work. Learning targets are clear and pupils say that they help them to improve their work. Assessment is thorough and pupils know their targets for the end of the year and are supported very well to reach these.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The school's leadership and management are good and, as a result, the school is increasingly effective. A key feature of the school's success is the energy and enthusiasm of the headteacher. She is supported by a talented and committed team of assistant headteachers and other senior leaders who share her vision and work very hard to secure improvement. The governing body is likewise fully involved with the life of the school. Governors are well-informed and provide strong challenge and support.

Challenging targets are set for pupils, which helps them to make progress and to improve their standards. The school's self-evaluation is outstanding. It is perceptive and detailed. The staff and governors have agreed clear targets for development. Progress towards these is monitored carefully, so that improvement is secured. Likewise, the school's process for the monitoring and evaluating of the quality of teaching is thorough and detailed. Good practice is shared, so that everyone can develop an understanding of what makes very good teaching and learning.

This is an exceptionally inclusive school where all children and pupils are valued and respected and discrimination of all kinds is eliminated. The school's actions to promote community cohesion are particularly effective. This is due to the range of external links with local schools and bodies, for example, another, more ethnically diverse, school in Rochdale and the link with Owerri School in Nigeria. The school has evaluated the impact of these links on pupils' awareness and understanding.

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**Annex A**

## 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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

Thank you for making me and the other inspector so welcome at your school. We enjoyed our visit and were very impressed with your excellent manners and how polite and helpful you were. We judged Halton Lodge to be a good school with many outstanding features. Some of the things we thought were very good included:

- the good progress you make in your learning
- your excellent attendance and behaviour
- how exceptionally-well adults in the school know you and look after you
- the excellent variety of activities you have, such as visits and trips to different places
- the enjoyable and interesting lessons you have
- the excellent way your headteacher and staff work so hard to make the school successful
- the interesting links you have with other schools
- the excellent way you contribute to community cohesion.

We asked your school to do two things to make it even better.

- to make sure that you make as much progress in writing as you do in other subjects.
- to make sure that you have more opportunities to assess your own and other pupils' work.