

Halsnead Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104426
Local Authority	Knowsley
Inspection number	336308
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Eileen Mulgrew HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	448
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Dave Barkley
Headteacher	Mrs Anita Abdous
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at pupils' learning; including the 14 lessons observed and two learning walks which involved visiting all classrooms for a short time. Fourteen teachers were observed teaching their own classes. Meetings were held with the senior leadership team, the Early Years Foundation Stage team, the Chair of the Governing Body, a few parents and carers of Nursery children, and two local authority officers. Inspectors looked at the school improvement plan, minutes of meetings held by the governing body, notes of visits by the School Improvement Partner, documents relating to safeguarding and the results of the 137 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 12 returned by the staff and 104 returned by pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the current standards in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2, and standards overall at the end of Key Stage 1
- the current quality of teaching, learning, progress and assessment throughout the school, especially for girls in Key Stage 2 and more able pupils
- how well pupils display positive outcomes
- whether the curriculum meets pupils' needs, especially girls across Key Stage 2 and more able pupils, and whether pupils find it enjoyable
- the capacity of the senior leadership team to move the school forward.

Information about the school

This larger than average size school is set within an area of some social and economic disadvantage. The vast majority of pupils are White British. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much lower than the average, with one speaking English as an additional language. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is smaller than the national average, as is that of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above the national average. There is a small number of pupils who are looked after by the local authority. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises of Nursery and two Reception classes. A Kids Club providing before- and after-school provision is managed by the governing body. The school holds the International Schools Award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****3**

Main findings

Halsnead Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Staff and pupils are proud to be members of the school community. It is a very welcoming place and visitors are greeted by smiling faces from staff and pupils alike. Relationships with parents and carers are good. The headteacher and staff know the pupils and their families well and provide good care, guidance and support for them. Parents and carers are confident their children will be well looked after and pupils say they feel very safe in all areas of the school. As a result, pupils are happy to be in school and their personal development is good.

By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have reached average academic standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because teaching overall is satisfactory, enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress from Year 1 to Year 6. Few pupils reach the higher grades for their age. Professional development has enabled teachers to improve their skills in teaching English which is reflected in improved achievement in this subject. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good. To increase teachers' understanding of the expected progress pupils should make in each class, the school has developed a system to check pupils' progress throughout the school based on termly assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. However, this information is not always used effectively to match planned activities to the level at which pupils are working. Consequently, many of the more able pupils do not receive challenging opportunities for learning which they need to reach their potential. Many of the older pupils know the level at which they are working but are unsure of what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils' work is marked regularly and usually affirms their efforts. In some cases marking is linked to the pupils' target and teachers' comments give a clear indication of the next steps pupils need to take to improve their work. The best examples of this are in pupils' 'big write' books. However, this practice is inconsistent throughout the school and across subjects.

Since the last inspection the school has gone through a period of staffing changes. Leading teachers have taken on the responsibility for subjects. Although the new appointees are very enthusiastic and willing, they have yet to develop the skills and knowledge to contribute more effectively to the monitoring and evaluation of the school. The headteacher communicates her vision for the school, and, together with the staff and governors, accurately identifies strengths and areas for improvement. For example, action taken to develop a consistent approach to managing pupils' behaviour has resulted in a drop in the number of pupils excluded. The school development plan is a comprehensive tool for improvement. However, the criteria for success are not always sufficiently precise to enable staff and governors to evaluate the success of planned

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actions. There has been limited improvement in science and mathematics. Nevertheless, there have been some successes and there is a firm foundation on which to further develop the school. The school, therefore, has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of teaching that is good to 60% by July 2010, by:
 - injecting greater pace into lessons
 - planning activities which are challenging, interesting and well matched to the different abilities of pupils
- -ensuring that the marking of pupils' work consistently involves them fully in knowing what they should do to improve their work.
- Embed assessment and tracking procedures so that teachers are well equipped to take responsibility for the progress of pupils in their class, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the procedures effectively to plot pupils' progress and to raise their achievement, especially for more able pupils
 - developing further the skills needed to assess the progress pupils make in a lesson.
- Strengthen leadership and managements at all levels, by:
 - equipping all senior leaders with the skills and opportunities needed to improve the checking of teaching and learning, focusing particularly on the progress pupils make in their learning
 - equipping middle leaders with the skills and opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of their subjects.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils are keen to do well and recognise the importance of working hard. Behaviour is good and contributes to the smooth running of the majority of lessons. Pupils show interest in their work and feel safe to 'have a go'.

By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In the 2009 assessment tasks, boys did better than girls but this was due to the particular group of pupils; this is not usually the case. The number of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in each subject was below the national average. Achievement is stronger in English than mathematics and science. Most pupils make satisfactory progress from the end of Key Stage 1 and some pupils make good progress. The support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make similar progress to their classmates. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 1 assessments in 2009, in reading, writing and mathematics was particularly low. The school's tracking shows

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that attainment in this key stage is now improving.

Attendance is average. Pupils' questionnaires demonstrate that almost all pupils enjoy school. Many pupils made comments similar to 'school is really fun and I learn a lot'. Pupils say they feel safe and any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively. They feel they can turn to any adult if they are troubled and particularly like going to the learning mentor who 'lets you play games, lets you talk and makes you feel better'. They have a good understanding of risks associated with new technology.

Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They know about a balanced diet and the need to take regular exercise. Pupils' uptake of school meals is above the average and they keep a '5 a day' record. Most pupils attend the many after-school sporting activities. Good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development enables pupils to relate well to each other and contribute to the calm, enjoyable atmosphere in school. School councillors, elected from every class, take their responsibilities seriously. Each term they visit other schools to develop collaborative working skills. Roles, such as head girl and head boy, playtime monitors and special helpers enable many pupils to contribute to the smooth running of the school. Contribution to the wider community is shown through the generous fund- raising and charity work for local, national and international contexts. Pupils are involved in planning improvements to the local park and were instrumental in enhancing site security and traffic planning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Conscientious planning enables all pupils to make satisfactory progress. Good classroom management ensures pupils behave well. All teachers have benefited from professional development, for example, in the better teaching of 'letters and sounds' and in developing effective questioning skills. Good teaching and learning are characterised by well-planned interesting activities delivered at a lively pace. Expectations are high; pupils know their targets, work is tailored to the individual needs of pupils, teachers use strategies to check pupils' understanding throughout the lesson, and their marking not only affirms pupils' efforts but clearly states what is needed to make more progress. While this practice is more fully embedded in English, it is not consistent throughout the school or across other subjects. Teaching and learning are less successful when planned activities are not matched to the precise needs of the pupils, where pace is slow and pupils are unclear about how to improve their work. Teachers' skills in using assessment data to plan work at the appropriate level for pupils' differing abilities, especially the more able, are at an early stage of development.

The curriculum is planned appropriately to meet the needs of pupils and in developing the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT). The introduction of the 'big write' is supporting pupils' writing development. The school has recently adopted the International Primary Curriculum which uses a range of interesting activities, such as visits and visitors, which act as a 'hook' for topics. Although the introduction of this has been well received by staff and pupils, who feel they have more fun in lessons now, it is too early to quantify any discernible impact on pupils' better achievement. As an International Primary School it promotes an understanding of the global community. For example, Year 6 pupils used ICT skills to link up to the Primalingua platform which enables pupils in several countries to share activities about local traditions, customs and research on others. Lessons in German and Spanish further develop this global understanding. Pupils value the diverse range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, for example, wheelchair basketball, healthy heroes, knitting, and shadow combat.

Relationships are secure across the school and the quality of pastoral care is effective in meeting pupils' needs. There are clear strategies for identifying the needs of vulnerable pupils and effective intervention strategies are put in place. The school has successfully supported pupils to overcome barriers to learning. The pre-school breakfast club and the after-school club contribute well to pupils' development. Pupils enjoy their time here and having access to a good range of resources both before and after school. Effective

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transition arrangements are in place for pupils moving to the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has the drive and determination to achieve this vision. Together with senior leaders she is committed to raising achievement for all groups of pupils. This clear vision is shared by middle leaders and all staff who work hard to live up to the school's motto 'strive to achieve'. Over the last two years, the headteacher has implemented many initiatives to develop the skills of the workforce. Senior leaders have engaged effectively with the local authority to provide training and advice for staff, most noticeably in teaching English. A tracking system has been introduced which is used to record each pupils' termly assessment results and the progress they make over the year. As a result, staff have a clearer understanding of the progress individual, and groups of pupils are expected to make in each class. Although this information is used to identify pupils who may need support, it is not yet used to identify pupils who need more challenge. Lesson observations, interviews with pupils and scrutiny of work enable senior leaders to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. However, opportunities for middle leaders to monitor and evaluate within subjects has only recently been introduced and their skills in these activities are underdeveloped.

Governance is well led. Governors know the main strengths and weaknesses of the school and offer support and challenge to the senior leadership team. Governors recognise that further training will enable them to better hold the school to account for its work. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily. All appropriate policies and procedures are in place and the school has information about the precise groups of pupils it serves, but the school has not yet fully evaluated the impact of these on pupils' well-being.

The headteacher and staff, including the administrative staff and site manager, are rigorous in implementing the requirements for safeguarding pupils. The school site is particularly safe; risk assessments are in place and child protection training is up to date and covers all staff. The school knows its pupils well through the comprehensive information collected when pupils start the school. It is a harmonious community, is respected in the local community and has links with the global community through its

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International Primary School status. As a result, the effectiveness of community cohesion is good.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Most children, including the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress towards their early learning goals. Children enter Nursery with skills and knowledge below those of children of a similar age. They make good progress because teaching is good and activities are well matched to their interests and abilities. Before children start in Nursery, much time is invested in building trusting relationships with home and assessing individual needs. As a result, parents and carers are confident that their children will be well cared for in this stimulating and happy environment. Children develop good personal qualities and begin to take responsibility for small tasks, such as hanging up their coats. There is a good balance between activities that are directed by adults and those that children pursue independently. Observations are accurate and inform future planning, which leads to suitable challenge. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader gives clear direction and has established effective policies and procedures. Although children have the opportunity to learn outside, the school has recognised that this aspect of the school's resources needs some updating.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a good response by parents to the parental questionnaires. Parents overall have positive views about the school and their children's enjoyment of what is on offer. Most consider their children to be safe. Inspectors agree with the parents' many positive views. Although some parents think that unacceptable behaviour is not managed effectively, the pupils thought that the very occasional inappropriate behaviour was managed well and the inspectors agree with them. A few parents and carers felt the school does not keep them fully informed of their children's progress and the school has plans to improve this. A few parents felt more could be done to challenge pupils who are more able. Inspectors agreed with this and include it in the body of the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Halsnead Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 141 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 448 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	58	55	39	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	65	48	34	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	35	73	52	18	13	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	61	43	73	52	7	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	66	47	74	52	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	46	33	80	57	12	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	58	41	75	53	3	2	2	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	32	75	53	4	3	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	39	80	57	5	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	33	78	55	11	8	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	33	79	56	10	7	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	49	35	75	53	13	9	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	44	73	52	6	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be. ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



29 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Halsnead Community Primary School, Whiston, L35 3TX

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you all for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed talking to you, seeing you at work in your classrooms and at play outside. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaires and those who met with us to talk about your school. You told us a lot about your school and said you would only change the football field by making it bigger!

Halsnead is a satisfactory school. These are some of the positive things about your school.

- You enjoy school and behave well.
- You told us you feel safe in school and we saw you are well looked after.
- You know how to keep healthy and enjoy keeping fit.
- You are kind to each other and you generously raise money for people less fortunate than yourselves.
- The younger children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes.
- By the time you leave Year 6 you reach standards in English, mathematics and science which are about the same as those achieved by pupils of a similar age.

We have asked the school to make some improvements. We want the school to increase the proportion of teaching that is good, so that you all receive work that is matched to your abilities, you know exactly how to improve it further and you all work at a good pace. We have also asked your headteacher to develop the system the school uses to check on how much progress you make so that teachers can use this information to help you attain at a higher level. There are some teachers in your school who have only just taken over the responsibility for checking how well you work in different subjects. We want the school to help them to develop the skills to do this important job.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Eileen Mulgrew

Her Majesty's Inspector

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