

# Highters Heath Community School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103365
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355367
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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

---

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	202
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jean Silitoe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jan Connor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 February 2008
<b>School address</b>	Highters Heath Lane Kings Heath, Birmingham B14 4LY
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 2459
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 430 8009
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@hiheath.bham.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	14–15 February 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	355367

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester  
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons and eight teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at policies, minutes of meetings and samples of pupils' work. In addition, 42 parental questionnaires were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The team looked at how the school was trying to raise standards in mathematics.
- It reviewed the impact of a recent programme of teaching life skills.
- It looked at the impact of the work of the curriculum and pastoral teams.
- It reviewed the quality of the senior leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high. An above-average proportion of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages, mainly Pakistani or mixed White and Black Caribbean. An average proportion of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high.

The school has a gold Activemark, national Healthy Schools status, a Quality Mark and a Bio Diversity award. The governing body manages a breakfast club each morning.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school. It has improved greatly under the current leadership. Standards are rising and the provision has many outstanding features, although these are yet to show fully in all outcomes. Leaders are very ambitious and base any improvements on a detailed and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The rising standards, the strength of the leadership shown by the headteacher and senior staff, the innovative and imaginative curriculum, and the excellent levels of care, guidance and support show that the school has an outstanding capacity to sustain these improvements and raise standards still further.

From their levels on entry to the school, which are often well below average, pupils make good progress and attain standards broadly in line with those expected. In 2010 more Year 6 pupils reached the higher levels in English, than similar pupils nationally. The standards in mathematics have been more inconsistent over time. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics and this is having a positive impact on the current standards throughout the school. However, in a number of subjects, pupils' learning is hindered by their lack of a varied and rich vocabulary and well-developed speaking skills. The school makes an outstanding contribution to helping the pupils feel safe and they are extremely confident that every adult in the school cares for them. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children's progress is sometimes hindered by a lack of clear learning goals in all activities and insufficient opportunities for children to follow their own interests.

The quality of teaching and learning are good overall and this has a positive impact on the progress made. Relationships promote an effective learning ethos. Behaviour is good and supports learning. There are major strengths in the curriculum and the levels of care, guidance and support for pupils. The curriculum has been developed with a number of strong cross-curricular links. In addition, the school has devised its own spelling and other schemes that are currently also being taken up by other schools. The introduction of philosophy lessons is helping raise the quality of pupils' ability to ask appropriate questions. The teaching of life skills is offering pupils and many of their parents an excellent opportunity to develop many skills they will need to get on in life. For example, a day when male relatives worked alongside children making wheeled models was extremely successful. The school has an excellent awareness of the community it serves and it strives to close the gap in pupils' experiences through a vast range of enrichment and exciting experiences, as well as providing outstanding support for those pupils whose circumstances make them most vulnerable.

The headteacher has provided excellent leadership since her appointment. Other systems and structures are strong, including those of the governing body. The work of the pastoral and curriculum teams is very effective in focusing support where it is needed. This is done

**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

through the close monitoring of the work of the school and ensuring that no pupil is allowed to underachieve, through the provision of high quality interventions.

## **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve pupils' communication skills throughout the school by developing a more structured and systematic approach to teaching their speaking and listening skills.
- Improve the use of assessment and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that:
  - teachers' planning includes clear expectations for children's learning in all activities
  - more opportunities are provided for child-initiated activities so they are more able to follow their own interests.

## **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils very much enjoy school, with attendance that is above average. The school's current data shows good progress throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics. This is supported by the very well-presented work in pupils' books which often shows good progress over time. It is also evident in the lessons observed during the inspection. In Year 6, pupils made excellent progress in learning to work out the areas and perimeters of complex two-dimensional shapes. In Year 2, pupils were well supported by older ones during a spelling, reading and phonic activity, helping secure good personal development for all. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are less well developed and they often do not have a rich enough vocabulary to support the work they are trying to complete. There are no significant differences in the progress of different groups of pupils including those from minority ethnic backgrounds. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make equally good progress as their peers because of good interventions and focused teaching. A particular strength is the child-friendly education plans and the way the pupils themselves are able to have some input into creating their targets. High quality work in art and design and design and technology is evident around the school.

The pupils are well prepared for life after school because of the progress made in their learning and the excellent development of life skills. This helps support their good quality spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents and carers are confident that the school teaches their children how to live healthy lives. The teaching of how to stay healthy has an important place throughout the curriculum.

**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

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The teaching and learning has a good impact on pupils' progress. Teachers and other adults work well together and they know their pupils' needs well. The most effective lessons are well-planned with clear objectives and expected outcomes. Assessment information is used well to match activities to the pupils' abilities and prior learning. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' marking is good and often very thorough and informative, although pupils do not always have opportunities to respond to the comments and suggestions made.

The outstanding curriculum has been developed with an excellent understanding of the pupils' needs. The development of a life skills curriculum, the involvement of parents, lessons in philosophy and other innovative practices are helping create pupils as learners. The imaginative use of the produce from the allotment and the use of outdoor 'forest school' learning in Key Stage 1 all add to the innovative work the school is doing. High quality care, guidance and support backs up the curriculum very effectively and helps ensure all pupils can access good quality learning and make good progress. There is a good breakfast club managed by the governing body, and this helps pupils who use it prepare calmly and effectively for the school day. This level of care extends beyond the school and into the community, as when staff help sick parents by ensuring their children can get to school.

**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

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Excellent leadership by the headteacher has been a major reason for the school's improvement. Innovative changes to the leadership and management systems have resulted in two teams of staff taking leadership for the pastoral and curriculum aspects of the school's work and this has been very successful. This is a major reason why the school has an outstanding capacity to continue improving as well as maintaining the current strengths. The pastoral and curriculum teams are most effective because they focus on every pupil as an individual to ensure their needs are met and any gaps between pupils are closed. An exceptionally detailed but practical improvement plan supports the school's work. The governing body is well organised and supports and challenges the school well. The safeguarding arrangements are good because of the excellent level of risk assessments made and the regular extensive and comprehensive training for all staff. The school has worked extremely hard to develop its work in promoting community cohesion. There is a good level of learning and understanding about how others live and worship in a wide range of faiths, the success of which is shown in letters written by pupils after visits. The school ensures a good level of equal opportunities by supporting all pupils in accessing excellent learning opportunities.

**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

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Many children enter the Reception class with abilities well below the levels expected. The assessment data shows many make good progress and leave class with abilities around those expected for their age. Children make a good start to their learning due to an outstanding induction system that includes support for parents and children being visited in their homes and nursery settings. Early assessments are made quickly and routines are rapidly established. The progress observed during the inspection was satisfactory, although data shows there is some good progress over time. Many of the activities observed during the inspection were too teacher-directed with insufficient opportunities for child-initiated tasks and exploratory learning was not developed successfully. New technology is used well to support learning and assessment. Many children use computers confidently. Lesson planning often lacks the expectations for individual pupils and the learning intentions for the group activities. The curriculum is satisfactory in that long term plans follow the statutory framework. However, the timetable restricts opportunities for children to build upon their ideas from one day to the next. Links with parents are good. There is a termly workshop for them and the school reports that through these parents are helping their children more at home with their learning. Leadership is satisfactory overall.



**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

A below-average proportion of the parents and carers returned questionnaires. Of those who did, all say that their children enjoy school and that the school teaches children how to stay healthy. The vast majority say the teaching is good and the school is well led and managed. This is also reflected in the findings of the inspection. A small minority felt behaviour was not always well dealt with but the evidence of the inspection is that behaviour is good and reward and sanction systems are clear.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highters Heath Community 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 202 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	43	24	57	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	64	14	33	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	52	19	45	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	57	16	38	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	28	67	13	31	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	57	16	38	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	57	18	43	0	0	0	0
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)	21	50	18	43	3	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	22	52	18	43	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	62	13	31	2	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	48	20	48	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	62	14	33	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	26	62	14	33	2	5	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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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:	<p>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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



16 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Highters Heath Community School, Birmingham, B14 4LY**

Thank you for the way you welcomed us when we visited your school recently. Thank you especially to those who met with an inspector and talked about the school.

Yours is an outstanding school. It has some very strong aspects, especially in the curriculum provided for you. We were very impressed with efforts you put into your record of achievement work, your spelling groups and other ideas like the outdoor learning and allotment. You are well-behaved and this helps your teachers provide you with interesting lessons.

You are exceptionally well looked after and cared for and, as you told us, teachers do help you to learn. Most of you are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. You are also very good at art and design, and design and technology.

To help the school continue its excellent work we have asked your teachers to do two things.

Give you lots of opportunities to learn new words and to speak in many different situations.

In the Reception class, give children more understanding of what learning is expected and more opportunities to follow their interests.

Enjoy your time at Highters Heath and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**