

High Bank First School and Early Years Unit

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107684
Local Authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	356215
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	David Byrne

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	96
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Caroline Holt
Headteacher	Mrs Kathleen Benetis
Date of previous school inspection	3 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Observations were made of teaching and learning in eight lessons, taught by five teachers. Meetings were held with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils and parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and policies for securing safeguarding and child protection. Questionnaires returned by 25 parents and carers were evaluated together with the questionnaires from staff.

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

- The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and its impact on learning across the school.
- The achievement and progress of pupils to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging for all pupils.
- The involvement of pupils in developing an understanding of how to improve their attainment.
- The impact of care, guidance and support on overcoming the barriers to learning of pupils who are vulnerable due to their circumstances.
- The impact of senior leaders and managers on subject leadership and on tackling weaknesses identified by the school.

Information about the school

This is smaller than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. The percentage with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average as is the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The large majority of pupils are White British with a small minority from other ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below average.

Since the last inspection, the school has been extended to include pupils in Years 5 and 6. There have also been changes in staffing with the replacement of two staff prompting the reorganisation of the senior leadership team. The school provides a breakfast club each day. The school shares the site with Liversedge Children's Centre which is subject to a separate inspection by Ofsted.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which successfully achieves its aim of ensuring that 'every child is important and respected'. One pupil stated that this school is like 'an island of peace' and indeed it is. For the large majority, the breakfast club heralds the start of each day. This accepts pupils into school at 8am with wholesome food and opportunities to socialise with others. This is a significant reason why, when school starts at 9am, children are settled and more than ready to enjoy the stimulating lessons provided for them. Pupils all get along very well and their outstanding behaviour contributes significantly to good progress in lessons. Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support benefit the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities as well as those who are vulnerable due to their circumstances. Consequently, pupils overcome what for many are significant barriers to learning and acquire very positive attitudes to school. Much is done to create good partnerships with families and raise attendance which is above average.

Achievement is good. Robust data held by the school indicate attainment is rising rapidly. Outstanding provision in the in the Early Years Foundation Stage gives children an excellent start. Between Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress overall with excellent progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attainment at Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Many pupils also attain well in art and design and all pupils develop good skills for their age in playing the violin. The good improvement made by pupils is because of good and at times outstanding teaching. Teachers successfully build pupils' confidence and promote a love of books and desire to write. Recent adaptations to the curriculum are accelerating progress because lessons are considered by pupils to be fun and relevant to their lives.

Opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are improving but are not yet fully-developed.

The excellent leadership by the headteacher, supported by a good governing body, sets out a crystal clear vision for the school's future. Excellent systems are in place to get the best from teachers and to ensure excellent levels of equality of opportunity. A shared culture amongst staff constantly seeks the very best for the pupils. Effective systems are in place to ensure that school's self-evaluation is accurate. Procedures for evaluating achievement in subjects other than English, mathematics and science and ICT are informal and not systematic enough to raise attainment in some subjects as high as possible. The school has a good capacity to improve in future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase achievement further by:

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- refining the quality of curriculum planning to give more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills of English, mathematics and ICT in wider range of subjects
- strengthening systems for monitoring the quality of provision in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils work hard in lessons because they are respected and given many opportunities to share their views and develop their ideas. Pupils have a good attitude to learning, are curious and keen to learn new skills and facts. During an excellent lesson exploring the features of food chains, pupils entered into deep discussions about the interrelationships between plants and animals and their importance for the future of the planet. Despite the difficulties that a significant minority has with aspects of language, all persevere with essential tasks such as writing and strive to do their best.

Children start Nursery with levels of development that are much lower than typical for their age. By the end of Early Years Foundation Stage their attainment has risen rapidly and is close to the national average. Some weaknesses remain, however, in aspects of language and elements of social and emotional development. In Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment builds on the positive outcomes from Reception. Attainment in Year 2 has risen considerably from the time of the last inspection and in each of the last two years has been significantly above average.. Attainment at the end of Year 6 in 2010 was broadly average. Robust data held by the school supported by good progress observed in lessons indicates that progress in Key Stage 2 is now good and the higher attainment in Key Stage 1 classes is moving up through the school. Pupils in Year 4, for example are currently working at levels that exceed expectations for their age. A weakness in writing, identified by the school, has been swiftly rectified and attainment has improved markedly. Many cohorts are small and have a high proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They benefit from high-quality support and make excellent progress as a result.

The warm and caring ethos within the school promotes good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Everyone gets on very well with each other and pupils report that there is virtually no aggressive behaviour or racism. Pupils are proud of their contribution to the school community as school councillors and helpers throughout the school. They respond maturely to expectations for them to apply to be interviewed for various roles in the school, for example, as office helpers during lunchtimes. Pupils know the choices needed to stay safe and healthy and most strive to be fit and eat sensibly. By Year 6, pupils develop into mature, friendly and relatively independent young people. These qualities, coupled with good attitudes to learning, sound academic skills and above average attendance prepare pupils well for their next stage of education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Pupils benefit from dedicated and skilled teachers. They are acutely aware of the need to develop the pupils' relatively narrow range of vocabulary and improve their confidence to take responsibility for their own learning. Lessons are successful in helping pupils to catch up in these areas and are planned to effectively meet the diverse range of abilities in each class. English, mathematics, science and ICT are taught well and at times specialist support from outside, for example in music, supplements the quality of teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and frequently make good use of ICT to bring learning alive. Teachers are skilled in building up a sense of excitement and a curiosity amongst pupils. This was observed in an outstanding English lesson in Key Stage 2. Pupils were intrigued by the story behind Macbeth and were highly-motivated to set about writing their own modern day version of the murder of Banquo. Very good support by teaching assistants for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures excellent levels of inclusion. Each pupil is known very well by all staff. Assessment is used wisely to diagnose the strengths and weaknesses and pupils participate in the assessment process. They benefit from good marking and regular discussions with staff that help them to develop a good awareness of their strengths and areas to improve.

The curriculum is imaginatively-planned. Strategies to link subjects together have added to the pupils' enthusiasm for learning and inspired teachers. It gives a very clear emphasis to raising attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Initiatives have been

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very successful in raising the profile of reading and pupils talk of their love of books and of an expanding opinion about different authors. A high profile is given to improving the pupils' knowledge and understanding of sounds and letters which improves pupils' confidence with words and spelling. The improvement in reading has had a positive impact on widening pupils' vocabulary and in turn increased the confidence and desire of pupils to write. Strengths also exist in the provision for mathematics and science, both of which are well-managed. All pupils in Key Stage 2 benefit by receiving tuition in playing the violin. Workshops with artists and visitors as well as opportunities for pupils to attend an after-school club result in good quality art, evident throughout the school.

Underpinning the success of the school are the outstanding levels of care, guidance and support. The school does not accept excuses and is persistent in doing what is right for the pupils. Excellent leadership by the headteacher, supported by a dedicated staff, has created strong systems for supporting pupils and families. In school, pupils with emotional needs are nurtured by caring staff and in the community, the school does all it can to support families. This is one reason why attendance has risen and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is of such a high quality. Much is done to keep parents and carers informed about how they can support their children with homework and parents and carers talk very positively about how useful this is. Procedures for inducting pupils to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage are exemplary. The school is totally committed to easing the transition of pupils to secondary school and willingly works with secondary colleagues when this is possible.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has the total respect of parents and carers, staff and pupils and gives the school a strong sense of purpose. High expectations are set and staff strive for excellence. Bold decisions are not shied away from; examples include the deployment of staff by subject strengths, the grouping of pupils by ability rather than age and the determination to open the school to everyone from 8am in the morning. Each decision shows great courage and determination that impact very well on the education of the pupils. Given the relatively few members of staff, delegation of some essential duties is not easily achieved. Each of the staff team plays their part. Effective leadership of English, mathematics, science and ICT contributes to good achievement but provision and impact on learning in other subjects is not as systematically evaluated.

Under the strong and dedicated lead of the Chair, the governing body plays a crucial role in shaping the school's direction. It successfully engages with staff and parents and carers

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to gain an insight into the needs of the school community and keep an eye on the school's effectiveness. Essential measures are taken to ensure that safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Good procedures for child protection and the safety of pupils are supplemented by close and productive partnerships with support agencies from health, education and social welfare. It is known that some families are reluctant to get involved with the school. Most parents welcome the efforts made to keep them informed and to help them and do much to help learning at home. This demonstrates good engagement overall. The school is totally dedicated to the inclusion of all, regardless of ability, need or culture. Much is done to fight any form of racism or discrimination. The school is committed to promoting community cohesion and does so extremely well within school and its locality. Widening the understanding of pupils about the lives of others in different communities and more diverse cultures is developing well. Links with a school with wide cultural diversity demonstrates this and there are plans to build upon the pupils' learning of French by linking with cultures abroad. The school makes a very positive difference to the lives of its pupils and therefore gives good value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	1
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Excellent leadership and management provide children with an outstanding foundation to their future education. Highly-skilled and dedicated staff give children a safe, secure and very exciting environment in which to learn. The need of each child is quickly identified and swift action taken to provide a programme that meets their needs. Those who are potentially able are picked out and subtly given more challenging tasks whilst those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are monitored, supported and given support to help them to catch up. Most children start school with levels of development that are much lower than expected for their age. Their overall levels of development are particularly low in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of

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the world and in aspects of personal, social and emotional development. The excellent quality of provision enables each child to make outstanding progress. By the time children move into Year 1, the proportion reaching the expectations for their age moves close to the national average. Despite the excellent progress, many children still have not fully caught up in some areas, most noticeably in their speech and language, emotional development and some aspects of mathematical understanding.

Children are encouraged to work together and to explore the world around them. Outdoor and indoor learning blend together. Activities such as planting seeds and bulbs are used to not only expand the children's understanding of the world but also to develop their understanding of number. Playing with bubbles and water not only develops the children's knowledge of materials but also promotes discussion and confidence to talk and use new vocabulary. The excellent teaching of sounds and letters, known as phonics, makes a big difference to the children's knowledge of words and prepares them well to recognise sounds in books and have a go at writing. Phonics sessions at school are at times open to parents and carers. They talk with great pride about how well their children are taught and along the way, develop a good understanding themselves of phonics and how to help their children at home. Their support is a vital factor in the excellent progress of their children. High levels of satisfaction are expressed by parents and carers with the start their children are given in the Early Years Foundation Stage; they praise the good relationships they have with the staff.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Just over a quarter of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. The large majority expressed high levels of satisfaction with the school. They praised the quality of teaching, the high levels of care and support offered by staff and the accessibility of the headteacher if there are any reasons to discuss issues. Parents say they are lucky to have a school that is so caring and welcomed the opportunity for their children to attend breakfast club. Much praise is given to the good start that their children get in the Early Years Foundation Stage and say that their children are 'pushed on' well there. Whilst the large majority feels that bullying is not an issue at the school, a few are concerned. The inspection findings endorse the positive comments of parents and carers. Behaviour observed was outstanding. The pupils stated that they feel safe and any incidents that occur are managed fairly and swiftly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Bank First School and Early Years Unit 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 25 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 96 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	68	6	24	0	0	1	4
The school keeps my child safe	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	76	6	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	84	3	12	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	20	80	5	20	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	84	4	16	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)	18	72	6	24	1	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	76	5	20	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	72	5	20	0	0	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	76	5	20	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	80	4	16	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	88	2	8	0	0	1	4

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).

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">■ 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 pupils' 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.



24 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Bank First School and Early Years Unit, Liversedge, WF15 8LD

It was a privilege to spend two days with you recently. You attend a good school which is preparing you well for your future lives. In the Nursery and Reception, children get an outstanding start to school. In Key Stages 1 and 2 you gain not just a secure knowledge of reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT, but also develop good attitudes to learning. You become mature and caring young citizens with outstanding behaviour. Your headteacher is doing a really good job and knows each of you and your families very well. Together with the teachers and other adults she makes sure you are all cared for extremely well. Teachers listen when you need help but also push you on in your lessons. Those of you who find learning difficult do extremely well and do as well as you can.

The breakfast club is an excellent idea which prepares you very well each morning for the school day ahead. There are not many schools where the large majority want to be there for eight in the morning! You told me that you like lessons because they are interesting and that you like school because you make good friends. Your obvious enjoyment of school is the main reason why your attendance is above the national average.

Part of my job is to suggest ways of making your school even better. I have asked that you have more opportunities for reading, writing and doing mathematics in different subjects and to extend your use of computers and science to other subjects as well. Although staff keep a close eye on how you do in English, mathematics and science, more could be done to monitor your performance in other subjects.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead inspector

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