

High Park School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135861
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	364053
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Eric Craven

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	3–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	78
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	11
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Butterfield
Headteacher	Mrs Liz Flavell
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Netherlands Avenue
	Low Moor, Bradford
	West Yorkshire BD6 1EA
Telephone number	01274 614092
Fax number	01274 613840
Email address	office@highpark.bradford.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Seventeen lessons were observed delivered by ten teachers, three higher level teaching assistants and one of the school's commissioned partners. Meetings were held with staff, pupils, the Chair of Governors, the school's educational psychologist and a parent. Telephone conversations were held with three parents and a psychiatrist from the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at planning files, records of pupils' progress, the school's protocols for safeguarding the pupils, and reports from external consultants and the school improvement partner. Inspectors also analysed the 23 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, along with 38 from members of staff and 47 from pupils.

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

- How effectively challenging behaviour is managed to minimise its impact on learning.
- The extent to which the curriculum accommodates the needs and wishes of parents and carers.
- How well staff are working together and pushing in the same direction.
- How effectively the school is making improvements in the provision and outcomes for post-16 pupils.

Information about the school

High Park School opened in April 2010 following a reorganisation of special schools in the local authority. It provides for pupils from all parts of the local authority and a few come from neighbouring local authorities. The pupils have communication and interaction disorders including autism and some have associated behavioural difficulties. Many of the pupils are the most vulnerable due to their circumstances in the local authority. All but one of the pupils has a statement of special educational needs; one pupil is being formally assessed. Four pupils are looked after by the local authority. Just over a third of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. About half are of White British heritage and the next largest group is those of Pakistani heritage. Three pupils are in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The boys outnumber the girls 4 to 1. Almost all are provided with transport to and from school. The school is currently based on two sites, seven miles apart. The local authority has recently stated its commitment to building a new school so that the pupils can be educated on one site. The school has the National Healthy School status.

Inspection judgements

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Main findings

This is a good and improving school. The challenge of amalgamating pupils and staff from six former special schools should not be underestimated. Senior leaders have done this well. The short life of the school has not been without its tribulations but these have been overcome and staff are upbeat and pulling in the same direction. Pupils greatly enjoy school, which is strongly affirmed by their parents and carers. The care and support provided by staff is outstanding. They know each pupil extremely well because of their well-informed assessments, strong links and good communications with parents and carers. Staff apply the school's excellent safeguarding arrangements meticulously well to ensure the pupils are kept safe. In addition the pupils feel secure at school because of the trusting relationships they build with staff, who make predictability a priority.

Pupils arrive at the school with very low starting points often linked to their significant special educational needs and/or learning disabilities. Progress is good as depicted by the school's accurate assessments and by case studies that show how well they acquire communication skills, make transitions, develop tolerance and learn ways to deal with their communication frustrations. This happens because of good teaching and an excellent curriculum that is geared closely to individual needs. Plans for individual pupils are delivered through a rolling programme of thematic projects that helps pupils see a relevance to their learning. This also helps staff devise age-appropriate activities, although this could be capitalised upon even more if post-16 pupils were taught together rather than in mixed-age classes. Teaching plays a full part in setting the conditions for learning. For example, staff use augmented communication aids such as visual timetables, photographs and symbols to help pupils understand what they need to do. Pupils learn to use these effectively to make sense of the word around them. The school draws on an array of partners outstandingly well to provide for the pupils' holistic needs. Multi-agency work is a strength. Professionals and families work well together to tackle the challenges pupils face. Other partners provide excellent medical, therapeutic and sensory inputs into the curriculum. When pupils occasionally get agitated and their behaviour becomes problematic staff de-escalate these situations well. Pupils on the two school councils have been enabled to have their say and the school has responded. As a result, more equipment is available for outside play.

Senior staff lead the school well and governors play their full part in both supporting the school and holding it to account. Effective monitoring and evaluations provide an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior staff make sure that data on pupils' progress is accurate although as yet they do not compare this with national data on similar pupils to check on how well their pupils are doing and to ensure staff's expectations are sufficiently high. Although the school has only been open for fourteen months a great deal has been achieved. Day to day systems run well; staff are valued and

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fulfil their roles very effectively because of good quality and well-focused training. The school has good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that post-16 pupils have more discrete provision so that they have the opportunity to spend more time with similarly aged pupils and have even more age-appropriate resources and learning opportunities.
- Compare the data collected on pupils' progress with other data collected nationally for similar pupils to check that the progress they make is sufficiently good and to help set challenging targets for the school.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils



Pupils enjoy their learning and achieve well, especially when they are given opportunities to make choices and are helped to communicate. Consequently, they make good strides in becoming calm and ready to learn. Those who are able to work at individual work-stations concentrate and persist with given tasks. In one-to-one sessions with staff most pupils engage and show an interest in the activities and challenges presented to them. In about three-quarters of the lessons observed pupils made good progress in their learning and in two others learning was outstanding. Although the school's records show that overall girls make better progress than boys this is not because of school failings to meet the needs of boys; it is because of individual pupils' capabilities and rates of learning.

Behaviour is good because staff lessen the anxieties that often lead to challenging behaviour. When it does occur they deal with it consistently well because of the training they have received so there is minimal disruption to learning. The school is successful in helping the pupils be less vulnerable. A good example is the work it does to get the pupils to greet people appropriately. Pupils learn right from wrong, and 'circle time' and group work for some make a good contribution to their social development. Many pupils are curious about the world around them and do appreciate differences that distinguish different people.

Pupils respond well to the opportunities given them to live healthy lives. For example, all pupils start the day with 15 minutes of 'Freddy Fit' activities, which encourage aerobic exercise; physical activity features prominently in the curriculum. Guidance has been given to parents and carers about healthy snacks and in food technology lessons pupils are encouraged to choose healthy ingredients. When possible pupils take on roles of responsibility and they respond well by doing simple jobs in class through to representing others by being a member of the school council. The school has a developing link with a school in Gambia and the pupils have been fundraising to support this school. All pupils get an opportunity to either attend their own annual review or to make pictorial or video contributions. A primary feature of the school's work is helping the pupils make transitions, which many find difficult and stressful. It does this well and pupils learn to cope with change. The very few pupils who have left the school since it opened have been well supported through carefully managed moves to new placements. Pupils' attendance is average in comparison to mainstream schools.

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

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	*
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
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
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	3
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

* In some special schools inspectors do not make a judgement about attainment in relation to expectations of the pupils' age.

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving and is good overall with a small proportion that is outstanding. No inadequate teaching was observed during the inspection. The characteristics of good and better lessons are:

- consistently good communication using augmented communication systems such as visual timetables
- good relationships between staff and pupils
- consistently detailed planning which includes individual learning objectives for pupils
- good quality vibrant resources, some of which have been made by staff
- support staff making significant contributions and working in harmony with teachers
- continual record keeping to inform assessments.

The use of praise to reinforce pupils' learning is used frequently and well throughout the school. However, there are occasions when its effect is diluted because staff do not always ensure pupils hear and understand why they are pleased with them. Assessment has improved markedly and is a strength of the school. Senior staff have ensured that the assessments made by staff are accurate and a secure baseline of pupils' attainment has

been made. The school uses assessments to keep a check on pupils' progress and they adjust their plans if a pupil is found to be underachieving.

The curriculum has a splendid focus on skills that pupils need to operate as effectively as possible; principally communication and life skills. It is exceptionally well matched to individual's needs and is carefully monitored to ensure it maximises learning. The views of parents, carers and pupils are incorporated into the curriculum through individual education plans that are mapped out at well annual reviews. The themes, through which the pupils' individual programmes are delivered, are carefully determined so that they are relevant to the pupils' ages and so they find them interesting and fun. A project on graffiti was recently very successful and an 'archaeology' week for older pupils and an 'Italian week' for younger ones are imminent.

The commitment and care from staff is of the highest order. Staff regularly go the extra mile to meet pupils' and families' needs, for example accompanying a pupil and parent to hospital for dental treatment well into the evening. The school works earnestly to ensure all pupils attend as regularly as possible. Almost all absences are for medical reasons. Pupils whose circumstances make them particularly vulnerable are provided with well-targeted support. Case studies show great attention to detail and reflect how well the staff use specialist agencies to help these pupils overcome barriers to their learning. Pupils arrive and depart from sites in a well-organised and safe way because of careful planning and excellent vigilance.

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	
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

These are the grades for the quality of provision

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior staff have got this new school off the ground very well. Out of the staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire 97% said they were proud to be a member of staff, testimony to the way a shared vision and drive for improvement that has been quickly achieved. Staff at all levels are given responsibility and enabled to make a contribution to the school's development. There is good marriage of support and encouragement with challenge and accountability. Understandably, the school improvement plan, which has guided the school through its first 14 months, is focused on getting effective systems in place and it has been successful. It has been monitored closely by senior staff. Senior leaders are very aware that this now needs to be shaped into a road map that will focus more on improved outcomes for pupils and improving further the quality of teaching and learning. Curriculum coordinators are increasingly developing their roles in monitoring and evaluating their subject areas although as yet are not making full use national data to aid

their evaluations. Senior staff's monitoring of teaching and learning, alongside good quality training have improved the quality of teaching.

No pupil misses out as staff work hard to remove any barriers to their learning; equalities of opportunity are good. Community cohesion is good and the staff strive to ensure pupils develop a sense of belonging to the school. Pupils appreciate they are part of a cohesive and very safe community because of the success staff have in applying the excellent safeguarding procedures and the way they help them learn about their place in the world.

The school gathers the general views of parents, carers and other professionals and a high proportion of parents and carers feel well informed and that their views count. Nevertheless, the school knows it needs to seek more specific responses to help involve stakeholders more fully in determining priorities for action. The effective governing body is led well by the Chair of Governors who is a frequent visitor to the school. Governors are committed to supporting the school and they take opportunities to ask searching questions. They are informed by the links they have to each of the school's classes. They are involved in shaping the direction of the school and will be better positioned to evaluate the school's achievements, as the new school improvement plan is to include targets related to pupils' outcomes. The achievements of the school at this early stage in its life show that it is providing good value for money.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

These are the grades for leadership and management

Early Years Foundation Stage

The small number of pupils who are in the Early Years Foundations Stage of learning are taught alongside their slightly older peers. They make good progress toward the early learning goals from very low starting points. They enjoy their early education and their demeanours demonstrate they feel safe and happy. There is a good balance of adult directed and child initiated learning and an equally good balance of the requirements of

the Early Years Foundation Stage and the school's individual programmes for pupils. Staff work very well as a team and the atmosphere is harmonious. Staff's knowledge is good and they are deployed effectively to exploit their skills. Planning is of high quality based on good observations and assessments and the staff quickly pick up on any concerns the pupils have. The environment has been improved and is suitably stimulating. There is still more to do in developing outdoor provision further and to build on the substantial financial investment that has been used to uplift this area. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Staff have a common sense of purpose. Partnerships with other agencies and other schools are used to good effect with staff having benefitted from visits to other settings. Self-evaluation is accurate and safeguarding receives due priority.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	
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

Sixth form

The progress of pupils in post-16 has improved as staffing has been stabilised. They are now making similarly good progress to those in the rest of the school. Currently, they are taught in mixed-age classes as a result of a relocation of pupils when there was a change of school site earlier this year. This has drawbacks but staff decided to reduce the number of transitions these pupils would have had to endure in a short period of time and have delayed the move to a dedicated and separate classroom. Nevertheless, they have been duly cognisant of the need to provide age-appropriate activities and resources and the opening of a post-16 common room is a good example. Determined leadership of post-16 provision has moved the needs of these pupils further up the agenda and plans have been set to liaise with colleges of further education to expand opportunities for these pupils once they leave school.

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	
Taking into account: Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

These are the grades for the sixth form

Views of parents and carers

Encouragingly, 96% of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire feel their children enjoy school. A very large majority also say their children are kept safe, that they are informed about their children's progress and the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour. A less fulsome response was given in terms of the progress their children are making and their preparedness for the future. The inspectors carefully considered the progress the pupils are making and how the school is helping them to be as well prepared for the future as possible. They found that both of these aspects of the school are good. The parents who spoke with the inspectors during the inspections were extremely positive about the school and the support it provided for them as well as their children.

The school conducted its own survey of parents and carers recently and the results show that about half of the parents and carers responded and unanimously they felt their children enjoyed school, were kept safe and were learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Park 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 78 pupils registered at the school.

Statements Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree		
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	48	11	48	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	57	8	35	0	0	1	4
My school informs me about my child's progress	11	48	10	43	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	8	35	10	43	3	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	39	12	52	1	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	8	35	12	52	2	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	8	35	11	48	2	9	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)	7	30	11	48	2	9	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	9	39	11	48	2	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	35	14	61	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	52	9	39	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	39	11	48	2	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	57	7	30	1	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

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.

What inspection judgements mean

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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:	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 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.

15 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Park School, Bradford, BD6 1EA

I really liked visiting your school and seeing you at work and play.

The things I especially liked about your school are:

- the way staff look after you and make sure you are safe
- that you learn to use pictures to tell people what you want
- the things you do are fun and interesting
- the way staff help you learn about keeping calm
- that you use both inside and outside of the school for learning
- Freddy Fit everyday is great fun
- that staff get other people from outside school to work with you
- the way Liz, Ann and other people organise everything.

I said to Liz and Hannah that it would be nice if the oldest pupils could have a classroom together. They are going to organise this for after the next holidays. Liz and Ann are also going to check how well you are doing in comparison to other pupils in schools like yours.

Thank you again and keep up the good work.

Yours sincerely

Eric Craven Lead Inspector



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