

# Highfield Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103125
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355323
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 July 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carolyn Carnaghan

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Nursery
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–4
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	138
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Razia Noreen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine McManus
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Highfield Road Birmingham B8 3QU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 6754617
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 6751898
<b>Email address</b>	enquiry@hifieldn.bham.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed seven lessons taught by four teachers and held meetings with staff, parents and carers, members of the governing body and children. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents, policies and 120 responses to questionnaires from parents and carers and those returned by staff.

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

- Does teaching promote the achievement of all groups of children, including the least able?
- Does the school ensure its curriculum supports development and understanding of the wider community and how effectively does this promote children's independence?
- How effective is the governing body in challenging the school in all its undertakings?

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average nursery school where the majority of children come from a Pakistani heritage. There is a small proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, predominantly with specific learning needs, and most children speak English as an additional language. Children come to school for either morning or afternoon sessions. There is a children's centre nearby that is led and managed by the school's governing body. This was inspected at the same time as the school and is reported separately.

**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

The nursery is outstanding. The school provides a wealth of opportunities for the children who come here and they leave with skills that are well above those expected for their age. Progress is outstanding across most learning areas but particularly high in communication, language and literacy and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make outstanding progress because the school ensures high levels of one-to-one support and focused planning, based on their needs.

Children have many opportunities to develop their skills through learning activities that are very well designed to give maximum chances for applying their growing knowledge and skills. Learning is developed so well because teachers plan very carefully, with the full range of children's needs in mind.

Teachers go out of their way to get to know the parents and carers of every child and this helps children further develop their learning at home, although this is an area the school concedes could be even more effective. The school holds regular family support meetings for mothers, fathers and extended family members across a range of topics. Family members in turn are highly vocal in their support for the school, expressing their appreciation of the outstanding efforts the school makes to ensure it is at the heart of its local community. This school is a hub for its families with parents and carers building their own skills through courses that will help them in their own lives. Family educational visits are enormously popular and provide opportunities for all to experience new places and things.

Children who do not speak English at home receive excellent support from bilingual teaching assistants. They provide opportunities for children to build their English skills through activities that encourage communication. The highly inclusive ethos of the school supports excellent equality for all. Children have an extensive range of choices to make every lesson, each with a focus on enabling them to progress. The curriculum is immensely creative, combining music, art and craft, with science and numbers, for example. The care, support and guidance given to children are outstanding and this builds their confidence and capabilities. Attendance is above average and where children are taken on holiday in term time, there is always support for learning while they are away.

The school's leaders and managers put the support of their community at the heart of all their activities. They are ably supported by the governing body, whose members are extremely proactive, visiting every day, providing a helping hand and challenging where necessary. Their diligence ensures the school's own rigorous self-evaluation leads to ongoing improvements. The efforts of this powerful team of individuals, working cooperatively towards shared goals, means the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Ensure parents and carers are always helped to support their children's learning at home.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of children

**1**

Children arrive at Highfield Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. After careful assessments at the start, children soon begin to gain in confidence. The development of communication skills is at the heart of learning and the focus on building vocabulary ensures children can tackle problems and begin to solve them. They leave with higher than expected skills for their age having made outstanding progress and achievement. Children with particular learning needs are helped through skilful adaptation of the outstanding curriculum and they too make outstanding progress.

Children are given the chance to help each other and this makes them highly cooperative between themselves. They are careful around each other, behaving extremely well. They appreciate how to be safe in their learning and play. Responsibility and independence are encouraged and rewarded, for instance children often volunteer to hold open the door for someone, or to help put things away. Positive attitudes are encouraged, as is exploration. Children develop the ability to make informed choices and this speeds their learning.

Children show great interest in their world, such as through exploring the world of insects or plants. They use their understanding of number to tally up the mini beasts they have found, the numbers of legs they have, or spots on a ladybird. Skills in writing are encouraged at every turn, with results and observations simply recorded on paper. Their development of skills with information and communication technology is excellent. Most children can use a computer, are learning how to use a keyboard and enjoy the fun of making sounds and pictures with them.

The children have an excellent understanding of how important it is to eat healthily and take exercise. They are very active, accessing the outdoor equipment when they wish to. They are aware of other people in the world, their cultures and beliefs. There are many celebrations throughout the year, such as a graduation ceremony, that always involve families and also help further develop their understanding and appreciation of the benefits of coming to school.

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*These are the grades for children's outcomes*

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

Teachers ensure the curriculum is vibrant and imaginative. Expert planning is based on thorough assessments, carried out throughout the time each child is at nursery school. Early assessments ensure every child's needs are understood and regular staff meetings provide a forum for discussion and further planning about what each requires next. Interventions by staff are seamless, ensuring children never run out of activities to explore. Healthy eating is promoted through activities such as counting fruit pieces to make a tasty snack or choosing a toast shape, buttering and describing it, and finally eating it. Teaching is outstanding. The highly motivated group of teaching assistants forms an integrated team with the teachers, working very closely alongside one another.

Learning sessions are free flowing and provide continuous activity for each group of children. There are opportunities for them to make choices and decisions, explore and use their imagination. Visitors are frequent and include a storyteller, a man who came to show the children some mini beasts and an artist. It is not uncommon to see a child working on a beautiful clay bowl, then moving on to creating a chart about something they have found in the garden. Later on they might be using African drums or creating a kite.

The care, guidance and support provided ensure all children are helped to achieve as well as they can. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities have extra support,

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sometimes involving outside educational experts. Regardless of any child's ability, their needs are catered for through exceptionally well-targeted help and guidance. Parents and carers appreciate the support of the whole team. The long list of outside trips and visits includes the seaside and a local home for the elderly where the children have been working in the garden. These add further memorable experiences.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets children's 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?**

The headteacher leads an able and energetic staff that she has empowered to take on responsibilities for planning and providing the outstanding range of learning activities. The senior team has excellent links with outside agencies, including the children's centre, that further support the families of children in their care. Ongoing analysis and evaluation of all the school's undertakings are based on excellent understanding of children's individual needs and those of their families. This leads to extremely well-focused planning for the whole school and has ensured that progress remains high.

The governing body is highly effective in both their support and challenge of the school's leaders. Its members come to school every day, become closely involved in everything that happens and are highly proactive in setting the agenda for future development. The governing body has a clear understanding of how well children are progressing, they explore possible areas for improvement and help senior leaders provide them. They ensure the school is very safe for its children and that policies are regularly reviewed and updated. Children can play extremely safely around the building and grounds.

Parents and carers feel confident to approach staff with any worries or concerns because the school engages so closely with them that they feel the school is a key element in the community. This exemplifies the outstanding promotion of community cohesion. The school endeavours to foster very warm relationships with everyone in its surrounding area and also provides opportunities for the children to learn about other places and cultures around the world. The attention to the needs and aspirations of everyone with whom it is associated means the school provides outstanding equality of opportunity.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
<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	1
<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>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire and the response rate was higher than that in most nursery schools. All responses were extremely positive about every aspect of the nursery school. All parents and carers agreed that their child enjoys coming to school, is very safe and that the school is well led and managed.

A large number of parents and carers, over 40, visited the inspection to express how very grateful they are for the work the school does with their children and for them as well. Several parents and carers arranged to come with their own translators, to ensure their views could be recorded during the inspection, since many speak English as an additional language. They acknowledged that Highfield Nursery is truly at the heart of its community and many told the inspectors how highly they think of the headteacher and her staff. Several said that the headteacher is visionary in her work at the school and that she always welcomes them most warmly. They told inspectors that the staff provide an environment that builds confidence in their children and they are very pleased with how much they are learning.



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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of children registered at Highfield Nurser 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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 138 children registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	116	97	4	3	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	112	93	6	5	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	108	90	12	10	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	105	88	12	10	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	111	93	9	8	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	107	89	13	11	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	106	88	12	10	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)	106	88	14	12	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	105	88	10	8	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	105	88	15	13	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	106	88	14	12	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	115	96	4	3	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	114	95	6	5	0	0	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 children's needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its children well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its children.
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 children. 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	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](http://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 child in their learning and development.
Attainment:	in other phases of school, for example primary schools, attainment is the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons. However, there is no national average for three- and four-year-olds. Therefore, in inspections of nursery schools, inspectors take account of expectations in the age-related bands of the Early Years Foundation Stage.
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 children 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 children.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets children's needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which children are learning in nursery sessions and over longer periods of time.

**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.**



14 July 2011

Dear Children

**Inspection of Highfield Nursery School, Birmingham, B8 3QU**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school on inspection. We really enjoyed meeting you, seeing you in learning activities and finding out about all the many exciting things your school provides for you. We particularly liked seeing you making your own snacks, handling the mini beasts and creating some wonderful bowls out of clay. You behave very well and are very kind to each other. In fact, you were very kind to me, one of you even drew me a lovely picture.

We also enjoyed meeting you mums, dads and carers, and lots of them came in to see me. They had some really positive things to say about your school, and we agree with them. Highfield is an outstanding nursery school because it helps you all to do very well and it supports its local community to live and work together happily.

We have asked the school to do one more thing to help you do even better. We said:

- please make sure all the parents and carers know what to do so they can really help you at home with your learning.

You can all help by continuing to work hard, behaving as well as you have been and by coming to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Carolyn Carnaghan

Lead Inspector

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