

Highbury Quadrant Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 100431 |
| Local Authority | Islington |
| Inspection number | 354848 |
| Inspection dates | 7–8 July 2011 |
| Reporting inspector | June Woolhouse |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 358 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Kate Tolson |
| Headteacher | Teresa Higgins |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 July 2008 |
| School address | Highbury New Park London N5 2DP |
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| | |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, observed all 13 teachers and held meetings with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, teaching staff, representatives of the governing body and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at: the school development plan; safeguarding documents; school policies; school assessment information; pupils' work in their exercise books; and, displays. They analysed information from 96 parent and carer questionnaires in addition to those from staff and pupils.

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

- Are planning, teaching and assessment consistently good enough to improve pupil achievement for all groups, especially in reading and writing?
- Does the governing body discharge all its statutory duties including regular monitoring of the school's budget?
- Are provision and children's learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage consistent in both year groups?

Information about the school

Highbury Quadrant is a larger-than-average primary school. It serves the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, their needs including: specific and moderate learning difficulties; speech, language and communication difficulties; and, emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. There are at least thirty five different ethnic groups represented in the school. The school holds the Active School and Healthy School awards. It has fully extended school status.

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

Pupils receive an outstanding, all-round education at this school. They start school in the Nursery class often without any pre-school experience and very few communication skills. Children thrive and make good progress because the Early Years Foundation Stage gives them a rich, interesting and secure environment in which to play, learn and communicate with their friends and teachers. Through the exceptional leadership of the headteacher, all the staff and the governing body not only understand the differences amongst the wide range of ethnic groups but have worked extremely effectively, and with great skill, to bring them together into a cohesive community. This essential condition is the foundation on which their outstanding teaching, care, guidance and support of the school community and beyond are so expertly based. Consequently, by the time pupils leave school in Year 6 they have achieved well, reached national standards in reading and writing, and exceeded them in mathematics. The gap between their mathematics and English progress continues to close because of further refinements to the teaching of reading and writing.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and all other groups achieve equally well. The school's detailed analysis of pupils' performance ensures all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and the emphasis on promoting positive attitudes to learning mean that their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and the pupils behave well. They understand a range of approaches to being healthy because there is excellent provision for physical education and a particularly effective programme to promote their personal, social and emotional well-being. All these aspects, including addressing fully the issues from the previous inspection, mean the school has an outstanding capacity to continue its improvement.

There is a rigorous and persistent approach to encouraging pupils to attend school regularly. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved steadily and is now average. Persistent absence has reduced by half in two years. Parents and carers are made fully aware of the school's expectations, although some still take extended holidays abroad. It is for this reason that attendance has not improved further.

The curriculum is very carefully tailored to pupils' needs. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) are very effectively embedded within a broad and interesting topic-based curriculum through consistently effective teaching and very fruitful partnerships with a range of providers. Pupils make outstanding progress because they are very accurately assessed and lesson plans cater well for both the range of ability and individual communication and/or emotional and behavioural needs.

Pupils say they feel safe and know who to talk to if there is a problem. Safeguarding procedures and policies are fully in place and a dedicated governor regularly monitors

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them. The most vulnerable pupils are very well catered for and settle quickly into school routines. The school evaluation procedures are very accurate and those teachers who require extra support are identified quickly by senior leaders or those responsible for coordinating subjects. All teaching is expected to be at least good and this demanding expectation is fully embedded in the culture of the school, as the year-on-year improvements testify. In spite of a falling roll and reduced funding, the vigilance and experience of the governing body result in the school giving good value for money and meeting all statutory requirements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the proportion of outstanding teaching increases by:
 - consistently planning lessons which identify precisely what pupils will know and understand by the end of each session
 - enabling pupils to use this information to check how successful they have been or, in partnership, the work of another pupil.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make outstanding progress from very low starting points in the main. Attainment in English and mathematics has improved steadily over the past four years and pupils' progress has accelerated. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning and work very well in a sustained way to consolidate what they are taught. This was the case in an outstanding mathematics lesson when they worked logically through the necessary steps to get correct answers to percentage problems and then consolidated their understanding by explaining their methods to each other or their teacher. In a literacy lesson, for example, pupils discussed a text and increased their understanding of the author's intentions by considering how sentences were written and ideas linked together. They increased their understanding of how to use clauses and improve their writing skills from well presented examples on the interactive whiteboard. Some of the pupils were able to check their work at the end by comparing it to a list of important features they had discussed at the start of the lesson. Pupils present their work well using a good handwriting style, punctuation and spellings. They use their learning targets, in conjunction with high quality marking, to improve their work further. Pupils' well developed social skills enable pupils to cooperate effectively in pairs and small groups which contribute to good behaviour and enjoyment in lessons.

The school council is influential in gathering pupils' views and securing outcomes that lead to improvements, for example in relation to playground safety. Pupils participate in fundraising events, an International evening and sports day, all of which contribute well to their personal development. They take on responsibilities as monitors or mentors to younger pupils. They visit the secondary school and increasing involvement in enterprise activities and ICT mean pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

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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 | 3 |
| The quality of pupils' learning and their progress | 1 |
| 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 | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |

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?

Teaching is consistently good and a great deal is outstanding because lessons are very well planned and take into account the range of needs of all pupils. Learning intentions are usually clear and most pupils know what they have to achieve by the end of a lesson. They have their own checklist against which they can judge their own progress and see whether or not they have met their challenging targets. In a very few lessons, this clarity of approach is not as obvious and pupils' progress, whilst good, is not as rapid as it is in other lessons. Teachers engage their pupils in practical and independent work extremely well through high quality questioning and enthusiastic engagement with their pupils. This means pupils can get on with independent learning without being impeded by too much class discussion. Those who need extra support get it. Resources are well prepared and teaching assistants are very well deployed with individuals or small groups with specific learning and/or behavioural needs. These adults work with initiative and manage challenging behaviour skilfully, contributing to rapid progress in learning. Assessment of pupils' understanding and what they need to learn next is very accurate so that most pupils make outstanding progress through the school.

The curriculum continues to improve through visits, visitors to school and strong links with local partner schools. There are particular strengths in art and design, music and drama and provision for pupils to take GCSE courses in their own languages alongside their parents. The strong focus on opportunities to improve communication skills means pupils

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are integrated quickly into the school community when their first language is not English and benefit from all that the school plans for them. The school's attention to planning a wide range of sporting activities has led to national awards, for example Healthy School and Activemark.

The high quality of pupils' care, guidance and support is a particular strength of the school. It results in very good attitudes to learning and respectful and considerate behaviour amongst all pupils. The family atmosphere is testament to the high level of inclusion generated by all adults and the cheerful and positive way they interact with pupils. Transition arrangements into school and when pupils leave to go to secondary school are well managed, enabling pupils to get on with the business of learning. There is a dedicated inclusion team which deals very effectively with pupils' special educational needs and ensures those who do not speak English regularly at home receive expert support in school to learn how to speak, read and write English.

Home-school support workers enhance provision through direct involvement with parents and carers to increase their understanding of school life, encouraging them to come into school, and reinforcing strongly the importance of regular attendance. The success of this work is evident in improving levels of attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, through her understanding of what the school needs to succeed, is very well supported in her vision by all adults, including the governing body. Everyone gives of their best in the relentless drive to ensure that by the time the pupils leave school not only have they reached the standards expected of them in English and mathematics but they have become well rounded young adults ready to take on the challenges of secondary education. All resources are used to these ends. The school development plan is appropriately focused on key learning skills of literacy and numeracy and addresses any weaknesses highlighted from regular analyses of data.

There is a very comprehensive tracking system which senior leaders and subject coordinators use on a termly basis to be certain that all pupils are making the requisite amount of progress to reach their targets. When they are falling behind prompt intervention, individual tuition or small group work gets them back on track. The headteacher is particularly vigilant about improving the quality of teaching and the accuracy of assessments. If the senior leadership team detects any lapse in teaching quality there are swift actions to support and achieve improvements.

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The senior leadership team misses no group in the scrutiny of pupils' progress, which is reflected in the excellent academic progress pupils make. There are very good links with specialist agencies, in particular to support minority ethnic groups and special educational needs and/or disabilities, providing further support for both pupils and their families. There are good links with parents and carers. The governing body, led by a very experienced chair, supports the school extremely well and understands how to challenge the headteacher about pupils' learning and well-being with great rigour. Detailed information about the wide ethnic mix of pupils and their families leads to a very cohesive community and a harmonious atmosphere in school. The school has good links with parents and carers and involves them in school activities to support their children's education, as well as welcoming them into school to volunteer their own skills. Equality of opportunity is first class and all pupils have opportunities to do their best. Any hint of discrimination is eradicated immediately through regular monitoring. School policies for child protection and safeguarding are securely in place and all staff receive regular high quality training. The governing body is vigilant about all aspects of safeguarding shown by both pupils' responses and those of most of their parents and carers.

These are the grades for leadership and management

| | |
|--|----------|
| The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 2 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 2 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start part time in the Nursery class with skills well below those expected for their ages especially in language and communication. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included and make good progress. Attainment has continued to improve over the past three years.

Both year groups are well resourced and children have good opportunities both indoors and outside to explore, investigate and pursue their own interests, fully supported in their

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learning by adults. They provide good role models for acquiring standard English and children are encouraged to speak in complete sentences about their experiences. Direct teaching is effective and well focused on developing children's communication, language and literacy skills and how to recognise and use letters to begin reading simple words and phrases. There are good opportunities for making marks on paper, leading to correct letter formation and simple sentences.

Children enjoy creative activities, such as painting or model making, and concentrate well, either alone or in small groups. They have continuous access to well planned, outdoor activities come rain or shine, eager to explore and use the equipment, suitably clad in colourful waterproof tops. They behave well, share equipment and are considerate towards each other because transition arrangements are good and children settle quickly.

The setting is well led and managed and good systems are in place for regular and systematic observations. There have been improvements in direct teaching as a result of rigorous observation by the senior leadership team. The recently appointed leader of the setting has already established her expectations for consistent teaching from all adults and the impact shows in this year's results. Good individual records of evidence show progress in literacy, numeracy and other noteworthy samples, across the six areas of learning. Welfare, health and safety procedures, including safeguarding, are fully in place and adults provide high standards of care and support, especially for the most vulnerable. Parents and carers are welcomed in to help with groups or show children particular aspects of their own culture, for example when they prepared healthy Turkish dishes for everyone to share. This contributes well to a cohesive and harmonious community. Partnerships with a range of agencies are effective and the school intervenes swiftly to support those with individual needs.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire was below average for a primary school, but their views were positive. The vast majority of parents and carers agree that their children enjoy school and felt that the school keeps their children safe. Inspectors investigated some individual concerns raised by a very small number of parents and carers about how the school took account of their views and suggestions, pupils' behaviour and their individual needs. Most comments had been dealt with over the year and improvements have been made. Overall, they judged all these aspects of provision to be good or outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highbury Quadrant Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 96 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 356 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 52 | 54 | 40 | 42 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 53 | 55 | 36 | 38 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| My school informs me about my child's progress | 40 | 42 | 44 | 46 | 6 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 37 | 39 | 49 | 51 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 2 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 45 | 47 | 45 | 47 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 42 | 44 | 41 | 43 | 9 | 9 | 2 | 2 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 37 | 39 | 54 | 56 | 4 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment) | 36 | 38 | 45 | 47 | 8 | 8 | 1 | 1 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 27 | 28 | 48 | 50 | 14 | 15 | 3 | 3 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 39 | 41 | 38 | 40 | 12 | 13 | 3 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 23 | 24 | 52 | 54 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 39 | 41 | 45 | 47 | 7 | 7 | 1 | 1 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 44 | 46 | 38 | 40 | 9 | 9 | 1 | 1 |

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 | 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: | <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.



11 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highbury Quadrant Primary School, London N5 2DP

I am writing to thank you very much for helping my team with the inspection last week. We had a splendid time seeing just what an excellent school you attend and how well you are doing in your lessons. Some of the mathematics lessons we saw were brilliant and you worked very hard. We hope you continue to work as hard at English and we realise that many of you do not always speak, read or write English all the time and have a bit more catching up to do. We were impressed with how well you all get along together even though you come from lots of different backgrounds. You are so lucky being able to learn, first hand, how other people get along. We were able to talk to some mums from Turkey who were showing the Reception class how to make delicious food. We had our share and loved the taste of it. It was also very healthy because it had lots of chopped vegetables in it too! We hope you continue to work as hard as you do so that you reach the right standard in English and mathematics by the time you leave. You certainly need to be at that level if you are going to carry on and enjoy all that the secondary school has to offer you. We also noticed that you have improved your attendance rates and that is equally important if you are going to be good learners. If you miss school you get behind and it is much more difficult to catch up.

We have asked your headteacher to carry on making sure that all the teachers teach well so that you make such excellent progress by the time you leave. You have your part to play by continuing to pay attention in the way you did when we observed your lessons and recording your work in exercise books to such a good standard. We hope the rest of the term goes well and your International evening was really successful.

Have a great summer and all the best for the next school year.

Yours sincerely

June Woolhouse

Lead inspector

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