

Highfields Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111081
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378229
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sarah Quinn

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Williams
Headteacher	Simon Dyson
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 17 lessons or parts of lessons taught by eight teachers. Discussions were held with groups of pupils, staff, members of the governing body, and with parents and carers. The inspection team observed the school's work, looked at pupils' work, the school's tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning, the school development plan and minutes from meetings. They also analysed the questionnaires received from 129 parents and carers, as well as responses 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.

- Whether the current rate of progress and the level of attainment in Key Stage 1 are improving.
- Whether higher attaining pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- Whether the impact of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage leads to sufficient progress for children.
- Whether the monitoring, analysis and target setting by all leaders and managers makes enough impact on outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

Highfields Community Primary School is slightly smaller than similar primary schools nationally. There are currently broadly average numbers of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage and there are few minority ethnic pupils or pupils who speak English as an additional language. There is a slightly lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has achieved the Cheshire Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark, Basic Skills Quality Mark, Healthy School status, Artsmark Silver, Primary Geography Quality Mark and Activemark. The school is part of the Nantwich Education Improvement Partnership.

The Funzone before- and after-school club operates on the school site and is a service delivered by a private provider. Funzone is subject to its own inspection. The report is available on the Ofsted website at www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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

Highfields Community Primary School is an outstanding school. Pupils make good progress overall and some make outstanding progress from their starting points. Their overall achievement is outstanding. They show high levels of enjoyment and their behaviour is exceptional. The quality of care, guidance and support offered to pupils is outstanding and contributes to their feelings of security and their overall achievement. All staff care for individual pupils and work closely with families and other agencies and professionals to ensure they receive the care and support they need. The school's promotion of equality ensures that those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and this enables them to achieve very well by the time they leave Year 6. Diversity is celebrated and well-planned projects enable pupils to develop respect and positive attitudes towards all people. Pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are generally in line with national expectations and below in some aspects. They make good overall progress to attain high standards by the time they leave Key Stage 2.

Teaching is good overall and teachers use a wide range of innovative strategies to engage pupils and ensure they enjoy their learning. The use of marking and assessment ensures that progress is good for all pupils, and excellent for some. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged to develop their skills and knowledge further. There is a wide range of well planned memorable experiences for pupils to enjoy, like the residential visit to Cumbria, gardening and themes to promote enterprise skills. The curriculum is highly effective and responds to pupils' interests.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school and very much appreciate the detailed information they receive. They contribute to the life of the school and participate in activities and training with staff and pupils. For example, they contributed to the school's self-evaluation and vision for the school, and enjoyed painting with the visiting artist. Leaders and managers work very well together and their vision for the school is articulated and shared by all staff, parents and carers and pupils. Leaders demonstrate commitment to training and development and work very well together to drive improvement. Tracking, monitoring and target setting are rigorous and ambitious and serve to give all staff a common aim to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. School self-evaluation procedures include staff, pupils, parents and carers and the governing body and all

stakeholders have an accurate view of where the school is and what they are aiming to achieve. This gives the school outstanding capacity for continuous improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision offered to high attaining pupils to enable them to achieve higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - developing teaching to promote independent learning and problem-solving skills
 - improving assessment and marking to provide high levels of challenge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment is high and pupils demonstrate outstanding enjoyment and achievement. This is because pupils learn a range of skills quickly, have excellent attitudes to learning and make good progress. Pupils show exceptional concentration and enjoyment during their lessons, for example, as they discuss business innovations and evaluate their successes during enterprise week. They say that learning is fun and that teachers plan interesting things for them to do. Where ongoing assessment is effective, pupils know in detail what they must do to improve their work and how to reach the next level of attainment, but this is inconsistent for high attaining pupils. Pupils like coming to school and this is reflected in their attendance, which is high. Basic skills are very well promoted and pupils enjoy using their writing, problem solving and information and communication technology skills throughout most of the tasks that they are set.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are keen to do well and enjoy the extra activities to boost their progress, which are carefully planned and well delivered. The intervention is swift, is of high quality and serves to close the achievement gap between these pupils and their peers. As a consequence, all pupils manage well in lessons and make good progress. Some pupils make exceptional progress, further closing the gap between themselves and their peers.

Pupils understand in detail how to keep themselves safe and healthy and talk confidently about safety procedures, such as fire evacuation, e-safety and what a healthy lunch might consist of. Pupils' excellent behaviour contributes effectively to their learning as they show high levels of respect to one another and work very well in groups and independently. They are respectful and demonstrate a mature understanding of right and wrong.

Pupils have time to reflect during the day and learn about the world around them. They talk confidently about the school's developing links with Sierra Leone and demonstrate high levels of interest. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they are reflective and thoughtful young people. This is demonstrated through projects, such as 'I have a dream' where pupils devise thought provoking and moving presentations using their well-developed information and communication technology skills to share their findings about the world in which

they live in. Pupils relish opportunities to make a positive contribution to the life of the school and the wider community and are keen to raise money for good causes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall and some is excellent. Teachers are enthusiastic and clearly enjoy teaching and supporting pupils' learning. Work is well-matched to the needs of the majority of pupils in the class, however, for higher attaining pupils, sometimes the focus is on their production of more work, rather than on more challenging tasks and problems. Support staff are deployed very well and are skilful in supporting learning. Assessment and marking are sometimes inconsistent for higher attaining pupils. Where marking is focused and linked to pupils' individual targets, pupils respond consistently well to teachers' suggestions and rapid progress is evident.

The excellent curriculum is very well balanced with a range of interesting opportunities to enhance and enrich pupils' experiences of school. They talk enthusiastically about visits from local people, such as a nurse, fire fighter, retail manager and diver, who serve to raise pupils' aspirations. A programme of exciting musical, sport and artistic activities is very well attended and pupils are very proud of the awards and trophies that they have won in competitions. Teachers make excellent cross-curricular links as they introduce orienteering skills during mathematics lessons and inspire pupils to write articles for publication in young people's newspapers.

The quality of care, guidance and support offered by the staff is outstanding and ensures that pupils are very well cared for throughout their time at school with focused support provided where necessary. Staff know pupils' and families' needs and demonstrate their commitment to pupils' feelings of security leading to happiness and willingness to learn.

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

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders and managers work extremely well together to drive improvement and targets are focused and challenging and based on securely tracked data and records of monitoring. Staff have high expectations of pupils and of each other and, as a consequence, improvements are rapid. Leaders and managers monitor teaching rigorously. This has led to significant recent improvements in teaching and assessment, which are having a sustained impact on outcomes, particularly in Key Stage 1.

Equality of opportunities for success for all pupils is promoted very well and all staff ensure that provision is skilfully adapted and appropriate to enable all pupils to access all activities. The school promotes diversity very well and ensures that all staff encourage respect and tolerance and challenge discrimination to excellent effect. The school has established excellent links with other schools and support agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are very well catered for, and that transition to secondary school is smooth. Pupils understand their position in the community. Staff work hard to enhance pupils' understanding of local and international communities and how they fit into these communities. The school is developing national links further to promote community cohesion.

Pupils are safe and their protection is a priority of the school. Systems and procedures are well focused to maintain pupils' ongoing safety and pupils who may be unhappy or are perceived to be potentially vulnerable are supported quickly and effectively. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and provides an effective level of challenge and support to enable the school's staff to reflect on and question what they are doing. Members of the governing body are involved in the day-to-day life of the school and are visible in the school community. They focus well on engagement with parents and carers, as do staff, and parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school and how they feel part of the school 'family'. The effective parent council is a strength and contributes very well to the development of links between parents and carers and the school.

These are the grades for the 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	2

The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that children make outstanding progress from their starting points. Observations are focused and regular and lead to detailed and personalised planning to address quickly children's next steps in learning. Children are involved in the planning for their own learning and this ensures their interests are valued. Staff know the importance of high quality interaction between children and between children and adults. They nurture positive attitudes to learning by acting as learning role models for children. Children demonstrate a very strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy and confidently use information and communication technology.

Outstanding leadership ensures staff are precise in their target setting and carefully track the progress of each individual, planning focused and child-led activities to support their identified next steps. Outcomes for children are outstanding and they laugh and play together very well. They act out stories and build houses from straw, sticks and bricks in the interesting indoor and outdoor areas. Teachers extend learning very effectively, for example, using a hair dryer to simulate the wolf blowing the children's stick houses down. Children make predictions and try to make their houses stronger. They learn effectively about respect as they talk together during snack time about differences and valuing individuals.

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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

About two thirds of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, which is much higher than seen nationally. These parents and carers have a very favourable view of the school. All are of the opinion that the school keeps their children safe and healthy; and an overwhelming majority say that their children enjoy school. This is in line with the views of the staff, and the inspection team's judgement that procedures to safeguard pupils are good. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concern about specific aspects of the school's work. These were investigated throughout the inspection and form part of the evidence used to arrive at the judgements.

Many favourable comments were made on the questionnaires such as, 'Highfields have gone out of their way to accommodate our needs', 'The school have been an enormous help and support my child,' and 'We chose Highfields because of the strong visionary leadership and the many enrichment opportunities'. Many parents and carers agree with the comment that 'the school has a safe, family feel.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highfields Community 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 129 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	68	38	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	85	66	40	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	69	53	54	42	3	2	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	70	54	51	40	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	73	57	51	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	52	55	43	2	2	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	51	61	47	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)	70	54	46	36	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	53	54	42	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	57	44	67	52	3	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	51	53	41	4	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	77	60	49	38	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	83	64	44	34	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfields Community Primary School, Nantwich CW5 6HA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. Thank you so much for letting us see your work. We found you to be very polite and very well behaved. You clearly enjoy school and your attendance is high. Very well done! You told us that you learn a lot in your lessons because teachers find exciting projects for you to be involved in. You attend an outstanding school and you make good progress. By the time you leave school, you have reached high standards. You should be very proud!

Your parents and carers also told us that they are extremely happy with what the school does for you and that there is very little they want to change. You take on a lot of responsibilities, raise money for very deserving charities and take good care of one another. We were pleased to see so many of you taking part in art, music, dance, gardening and sport, which helps to keep you healthy. The staff take excellent care of you and it was good to see that you like and respect your teachers so much in return.

We have asked the school to do one thing keep the school improving. We have asked the teachers to think of exciting ways to challenge those of you who manage to complete your work well.

Thank you once again for your help when we visited. We wish you all well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Quinn
Lead inspector

