

# Hightown School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107669
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	377622
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Cathy Morgan

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	220
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sarah Liley
<b>Headteacher</b>	Carolyn Prescott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2009
<b>School address</b>	Hightown Road Liversedge WF15 8BL
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Cathy Morgan  
Kathryn Dodd

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed parts of 15 lessons, taught by nine teachers. The inspectors observed the breakfast club provision, a school assembly, listened to pupils reading, held discussions with staff, members of the governing body, a local authority representative, and two groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation. This included the school's safeguarding procedures, information about the progress and attainment of pupils, school improvement planning, the school's self-evaluation, curriculum and lesson planning, policies, and records of monitoring undertaken by senior leaders and the governing body. Inspectors scrutinised 73 parental questionnaires and others returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

Hightown is an average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are White British, with a slightly higher proportion of boys than girls. Few pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has risen steadily over the last three years and is consistently higher than average. The percentage of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs that are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is higher than that seen nationally. The number of pupils attending the school has increased since the time of the previous inspection and an above-average proportion of pupils joins the school at times other than the normal start of the school year. Kirklees schools are currently undergoing reorganisation and this school became an all-through primary in 2009/10. The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2011, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. There is an on-site breakfast club, which has recently received the Healthy Eating Gold Award.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

### Key Findings

- The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory. The school is not yet good because, over time, inconsistencies in teaching have led to satisfactory achievement. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Attainment, over time, has been below average. However, recently, the rate of pupils' progress has increased and pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach standards of attainment in English and mathematics that are in line with age-related expectations. Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensures that they, too, make satisfactory progress.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make swift progress in most areas of learning and particularly in their early language and literacy. Teaching, however, does not always provide sufficient opportunities for children to make individual choices and develop their independent skills.
- Effective leadership of teaching means that, while teaching is satisfactory overall, it is improving and much of it is now good. Teachers and teaching assistants are enthusiastic and skilled at motivating pupils to learn. Although lessons are usually challenging, target setting procedures are not implemented consistently. Consequently, pupils do not always understand how to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and they feel safe. Pupils are polite, respectful and have positive attitudes to learning. They make valuable contributions to the work of the school in order to create a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning. Staff, parents and carers work hard to ensure that pupils' attendance continues to improve.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's weaknesses and, despite changes in staff, they have acted quickly to improve teaching and raise

attainment. Leaders have high expectations of teachers and staff performance management is linked with effective professional development. Nevertheless, the role of middle leaders in using performance data to inform their planning and set targets for individual and groups of pupils is underdeveloped.

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

- Improve the rate at which pupils make progress by:
  - increasing the proportion of good or better teaching
  - implementing a consistent approach to target setting so that pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their work
  - providing more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to choose their own activities and learn independently.
  
- Strengthen the distributed management of the school to secure sustained and fast improvement in outcomes for pupils by:
  - improving the accuracy and regularity of reporting on and analysing the performance of specific groups of pupils
  - ensuring that planning includes specific and measurable targets for individuals and groups of pupils.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

After the last inspection, the school became an all-through primary and experienced significant changes in staffing and in the profile of pupils. As a result, pupils' progress slowed and attainment fell to below average. Boys, generally, performed better than girls and the performance of the more-able pupils was below expectations. Effective leadership has eliminated those areas of underperformance and this year's test results, though unvalidated, show that attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved significantly and is now in line with the national average. The attainment of girls has improved and is now similar to that of boys and the more-able pupils' attainment is broadly as expected for their age.

Children join the school with skills and abilities that are well below the levels expected of four-year-olds. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides strong foundations for children's learning so that, by the time they start in Year 1, their attainment is broadly average. The specialist teaching of sounds that letters make (phonics) in the Reception Year and Key Stage 1 is very effective. Pupils are confident when sounding out unfamiliar words and the low-attaining pupils have learnt to persevere in order to pronounce words correctly. Throughout the school, much headway is being made in nurturing children's interest in reading and engaging parents and carers in reading with their children at home. That intensive support is systematically improving attainment in reading, writing, and spelling so that, by the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with national expectations. Throughout Key Stage 2, most pupils make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Year 6,

attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics is broadly average. The introduction of stimulating learning resources has helped to improve the accuracy of pupils' mental calculations and their ability to apply numeracy skills when solving problems. Older pupils benefit greatly from opportunities to write independently and accurately by completing innovative and challenging tasks.

While pupils' progress, over time, is satisfactory, there are clear signs that it is accelerating, especially when work is challenging and inspiring. For example, a combination of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities required pupils to collaborate in order to solve problems involving the practical application of fractions. As a result, they made good progress in developing their numeracy skills. In some lessons, progress is slower when the teacher dictates the pace of the lesson and pupils are unable to begin tasks as soon as they are able. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are supported well by classroom assistants, receive effective interventions to improve their language and communication skills, and they are encouraged to participate fully in lessons. Parents and carers are mainly pleased with how well their children learn and inspection findings generally confirm their views as attainment is rising.

### **Quality of teaching**

The impact of teaching over time has been satisfactory. However, examples of good and outstanding teaching were seen during this inspection. That reflects the continuing improvement since stability in staffing has improved. Teachers and pupils enjoy the stimulating and creative curriculum which has recently been introduced. It enables teachers and teaching assistants to plan collaboratively and effectively to ensure that all pupils, including those who need additional support, are able to participate fully in lessons and make progress.

In the best lessons, interesting activities are planned well to enable teachers to use an extensive range of information and communication technology and a variety of strategies which allow pupils to become active and independent learners. In one successful literacy lesson, Year 3 pupils demonstrated high-level thinking and problem-solving skills as they selected techniques such as 'thinking partners' and 'hot potatoes' to create their own 'rap' song. They enthused about the quality of learning because it had been fun.

Teachers pay good attention to promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development in lessons. Parents and carers, rightly, believe that teaching is helping their children to flourish. Pupils report that good teaching helps them to develop their communication, reading, writing, and mathematics skills. In some classes, pupils are encouraged to identify their own learning objectives and, while this helps them to understand what they will achieve in a lesson, this practice is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage, often, plan their lessons together and this usually works well, but, on occasions, younger children are not given sufficient opportunities to make choices and exploit their ability to learn independently. Although the school is increasingly using data to good effect, pupils do not always know how their targets, or how well they are doing and this means their progress is not as fast as it could be.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils are polite and mature in their attitudes to others. They play and work happily together and incidents of bullying are rare. Many pupils are members of the effective school council and parliament groups and are actively involved in working with the governing body to undertake health and safety checks around the school. The council has created helpful direction signs to assist disabled pupils and visitors to the school in finding their way around. Older pupils take their role as 'buddies' to younger pupils very seriously and use the 'friendship stop' on the school playground to ensure that all play happily together. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know who to approach when occasional incidents occur.

Almost all pupils work hard in lessons, relationships are positive and pupils show good attitudes to their work. A small number of parents and carers raised some concerns about behaviour in the school. However, behaviour is improving as a result of a well-defined, coherent and successful behaviour policy that pupils understand and respect. The school, parents and carers have worked extremely hard together to improve attendance, which is now as expected nationally.

A number of parents and carers made appreciative comments about how the school cares for their children and promotes their personal development. Others commented on how the good-quality breakfast club is enjoyed by their children and this was confirmed by the inspection.

## **Leadership and management**

The school has suffered from a high level of teacher turnover in recent years, including in subject leadership positions. The determined leadership of the headteacher has successfully ensured that, despite the difficulties, there is a clear sense of purpose and direction for the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and targets for improvement are appropriate and challenging. The governing body is aware of the improvements that are needed and is actively involved in moving the school forward. The passionate and committed leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has helped to bring about improvements in children's achievement. A range of strategies has been identified and implemented to tackle underperformance successfully across the school. Support for pupils who do not join the school in the Reception Year and the additional support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties is very effective in helping them to improve their achievement. The impact of actions taken by leaders and managers since the previous inspection and the successes secured by leaders who are new to their role demonstrate adequate capacity to improve. There is a need to strengthen the distributed management of the school, particularly the role of middle leaders in analysing and using performance data to track pupils' progress and plan the next steps.

Staff feel well supported and are proud to work in the school. Regular observations of teaching enable senior leaders to have a clear picture of individual strengths and areas for development and to identify where action is needed to improve teachers' performance. The introduction of a new curriculum contributes well to promoting

pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. An effective programme of professional development is enabling staff to demonstrate improvements, particularly in the teaching of reading and mathematics. Tracking of the progress made by pupils is also improving, but, as yet, does not enable the governing body, leaders, and teachers to ensure that all pupils receive accurate and personalised targets to assist them in improving their own learning.

Leaders and managers tackle discrimination effectively and actively promote equality of opportunity throughout the school. Safeguarding arrangements in the school are secure. Partnerships with local schools are developing well and staff are benefiting from opportunities to share effective practice in teaching and learning.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



21 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hightown School, Liversedge, WF15 8BL**

Thank you for the welcome you gave to us when we carried out your recent inspection. We enjoyed talking to you and it was very useful to have your views about your school. We were impressed with your mature behaviour and how hard you were working in lessons. We enjoyed particularly hearing about your successful contributions to the work of the school through your council and parliament representatives.

We think your school is satisfactory and is improving quickly. You enjoy lessons, especially those that allow you to be active and independent. You benefit greatly from the interesting curriculum, which provides you with engaging lesson activities. Staff look after you well so you feel secure in school. You are very kind to one another and you all know how to keep yourselves safe.

Your headteacher wants to make your school even better, so we have asked her, the senior staff and governing body to help you by:

- making every lesson as good as possible and to always make your targets clear to you so you know how well you are doing
- giving the younger children even more opportunities to choose their own activities and to work independently.

You can all help too by continuing to work hard and keeping up your much improved attendance. We send you and all of the staff at your school our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Cathy Morgan  
Lead Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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