

# Highbury School

Lower Edge Road, Rastrick, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 3LD

**Inspection dates** 15–16 October 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children who arrive at the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage make rapid progress from very low starting points.
- Pupils' achievement throughout the school is good. They make exceptionally good progress in the development of their communication and independence skills.
- The quality of teaching is good and is steadily improving due to better monitoring by senior leaders. Teachers are highly committed to finding imaginative ways to help pupils with very different abilities learn new skills and knowledge.
- Pupils' behaviour is good because they enjoy coming to school and want to learn. They feel safe in school. The care and support provided by staff is outstanding.
- Highbury is a very happy and improving school. The new headteacher has energised the school with her enthusiasm and there is a shared commitment to raising standards. With the support of the governing body she is driving changes which are improving all aspects of the school's work.
- Staff at all levels enjoy excellent partnerships with parents who feel very supported by the school and fully informed about their child's progress.
- The school provides good support and expertise to local mainstream schools which helps their staff to develop their skills in providing for pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The progress of higher-ability pupils is sometimes restricted because too much time is spent on whole-class teaching.
- Progress data is not capturing the performance of different groups and subjects well enough to enable senior leaders and governors to make rigorous checks on learning.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made observations in 12 lessons, four of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Additionally, pupils were observed in the playground, on arrival, at lunchtime and around school.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work and listened to some of them read. A meeting was held with a group of pupils to gather their views, and discussions were held with individual pupils and staff during lessons and throughout the inspection.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, members of the governing body and a group of parents. Discussions were held with representatives from the school's partners such as the physiotherapist, speech and language therapist and music therapist. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire, but inspectors took account of the school's own surveys as well as the meeting with parents. The views expressed in the 34 staff questionnaires returned were also taken into account as were e-mail submissions from partner schools and agencies.

## Inspection team

Hilary Ward, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Kingston

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Highbury School provides for pupils with a wide range of special educational needs, including those with autism spectrum conditions, moderate and severe learning difficulties, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. The proportion of pupils with autism spectrum conditions has increased in recent years. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs.
- Pupil numbers have increased significantly in the last 12 months and the school and governors are in discussion with the local authority regarding further admissions.
- There are more than twice as many boys as girls, which is typical for schools of this type.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic families is above the national average although only a few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is very high. (Pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, those in local authority care and children of service families.)
- The school arranges for a small number of pupils to attend other schools with support from Highbury staff. This is sometimes as preparation for a move to another placement or to meet the needs of a pupil in a particular subject. The school offers advice and support regarding special educational needs to these schools and to other schools in the area.
- Since the previous inspection a new headteacher has been appointed.

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

- Increase the rate of progress, particularly of pupils with higher ability, by:
  - moving these pupils on more quickly to independent work which is closely matched to their individual ability and spending less time in whole-class sessions.
  - ensuring their activities and tasks are building more rapidly on their prior learning.
- Complete the review of data collection already started, to ensure that senior leaders and members of the governing body are able to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils and subjects more effectively.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge well below those expected for their age. Teachers collect information from parents and other settings and plan admissions exceptionally carefully. This ensures children's needs are well understood so that they feel safe and happy and settle quickly into the routines of the day. Children are provided with stimulating activities and sensitive support so that the vast majority begin to make rapid progress, particularly in their social skills and communication.
- Pupils enter the school at all ages and stages. Older pupils usually arrive having experienced difficulties in prior placements. Their individual learning needs are met well so that they begin to enjoy learning again, gain confidence and make good progress.
- Pupils make good progress in their reading, writing and mathematical skills from their low and often very low starting points. This is true for pupils with differing disabilities, those eligible for the additional pupil premium funding and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds. All groups of pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. However, some individual pupils of higher ability are not challenged to move on quickly enough. On occasions they spend too long in whole-class work and not enough on activities which are well matched to their individual abilities.
- Many pupils have made particularly good progress in their reading since the introduction of a phonics programme which helps them to understand letters and the sounds they make. The school has identified that the progress pupils make in their writing skills has not matched that of reading and has put actions in place to share best practice across the school so that pupils can achieve as well as possible in this area.
- Some higher-ability pupils develop their understanding of mathematical language to solve problems. They find this very much more difficult than recognising numbers and counting. In one lesson pupils showed they could use both their reading and mathematical skills by following a recipe and weighing ingredients to make biscuits.
- Pupils with more severe and profound learning difficulties are achieving very well since their curriculum was revised to give them more sensory experiences. They develop their communication skills well and use a range of visual aids and communication aids to express their likes and dislikes and join in group sessions.
- Pupils make exceptional strides in their independence and self-help skills. Those pupils who are able to benefit from time spent in mainstream schools are supported to attend for well-organised sessions. They develop personal, social and academic skills which sometimes enable them to move to a mainstream setting.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good overall and sometimes it is outstanding. Teaching has improved due to more effective monitoring and professional development of all staff through individual and whole-school training.
- The development of effective communication is a strong feature of all lessons from the excellent beginnings in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Sign, symbols, switches and other forms of communication aid effectively support learning. For instance, most teachers use visual timelines which help children to know what will happen during the day and reduce their anxieties. These routines and communication methods are continued across the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together as teams to plan lessons and assess pupils' progress by taking photographs, making observations and reviewing next steps. They know their pupils very well and think of innovative ways to help them understand new ideas and progress their learning over time. For instance, a class of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties enjoyed a familiar sensory session aboard a ship, anticipating the songs, experiencing the sensations of movement in the ship by lying on airbeds and the feel of sprays

of water, while exploring seashells and sponges they might find at sea. Staff encouraged pupil involvement sensitively and watched their reactions to develop the topic further for each individual in future sessions.

- In most lessons teachers set targets which will stretch their pupils, building on what they have learned previously. However, on occasions, too much of the lesson is spent on whole-group teaching and not enough time is given to the very good work which teachers prepare for more individual and independent learning.
- Teachers plan interesting activities that pupils enjoy and help them to understand new topics. One class made an imaginary trip across London on a big red bus with their friends and compared this to other forms of transport in the city.
- Teaching assistants make a very effective contribution to pupils' learning. They ask questions and help pupils to develop their ideas and voice their opinions very well. They provide high quality support for pupils' personal, medical and learning needs.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils love coming to school. As one pupil put it, 'This is the bestest place ever, it's amazing!' This was reinforced by the obvious enjoyment of school expressed by other pupils.
- Highbury keeps pupils very safe and pupils and their parents are confident they will be extremely well looked after and that the level of care is exceptionally high.
- Some pupils do occasionally experience difficulties connected with their special educational needs, by showing anxious or inappropriate behaviour, but such times are very well managed by staff so that there are rarely disruptions to the learning of others. The school looks outwards to share and learn about best practice from others and is currently developing a more consistent positive behaviour approach with support from another school.
- Pupils make friends and enjoy sharing social times with them. Physically able pupils encourage those in wheelchairs to join in their games. Pupils love to receive rewards, collecting starfish or flowers for good work and taking great pride in their achievements at celebration assemblies.
- Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibilities, sometimes by doing small things such as handing out pens or as representatives on the school council or part of the recycling team who pick up litter in the local community. The school helps pupils to understand as well as possible about how to keep themselves safe, sometimes on an individual basis as a need arises. Pupils say bullying is unheard of. Some pupils gain enough maturity to know when they need to ask for time-out, or to avoid triggers which might result in difficult behaviour.
- Attendance is improving as a result of the school's measures to follow up on absences. However, the majority of absences are due to medical and health conditions.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The new headteacher, with the support of her governing body, is pushing forward school improvements. Increasingly accurate self-evaluation is linked to school development planning and has led to a more consistently good quality of teaching and learning through improved performance management. Morale in the school is high with a 'can-do' attitude from the whole-school community.
- The school communicates exceptionally well with parents and with a wide range of agencies and other schools and settings who contribute to pupils' education and well-being. As a result everyone involved with the child feels they are a partner in decisions. Parents say they feel extremely well supported by staff in the school and know they can ask for help and advice if they are experiencing difficulties with their child at home.
- Teachers know pupils well and track their individual achievements in detail. However, changes in the assessment materials used and the way data is recorded, means that senior leaders and members of the governing body do not currently have a sufficiently secure analysis of the

performance of different groups of pupils.

- The curriculum is reviewed regularly to ensure topics will capture pupils' interest. The curriculum is now taught differently and is a better match to the needs of different groups of pupils. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is threaded through all aspects of the curriculum and is promoted throughout the day as opportunities arise. The school provides a vast range of rich activities such as wheelchair dance or the signing and signing choir. Many of these activities take pupils into competitions or performances in other schools where they love to show what they can do.
- The local authority provides light-touch support to the school and is confident it has demonstrated a good capacity to continue to improve. It is appreciative of the advisory work Highbury offers to other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors evaluate their own skills and effectiveness and make a strong contribution to determining the direction of the school. All governors have a link to a class and to a subject or specialist aspect and this enables governors to be well informed to ask questions and challenge senior leaders. They ensure the pupil premium is used effectively and have agreed plans to provide opportunities for pupils to enjoy dance and rebound sessions through the additional sports and physical education funding the school will receive. Governors are clear about the links between the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and staff salary progression. All statutory requirements are met, including those to safeguard pupils.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107591
<b>Local authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	425703

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	61
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Anne Howarth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Sweet
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01484 716319
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