

Highfield Primary School

Marsh Lane, Farnworth, Bolton, Lancashire BL4 0AP

Inspection dates

2–3 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. Their moral purpose in striving for the best outcomes for all pupils is evident in the caring and nurturing environment that permeates throughout Highfield Primary School.
- Committed and caring staff provide high-quality education. They use good subject knowledge and the broad and balanced curriculum to engage pupils in their learning.
- Work in lessons and the many opportunities for trips and clubs provided by staff give pupils a well-rounded and positive school experience.
- Pupils are well prepared for secondary school. From starting points below those typically expected for their age, pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- Behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are respectful, articulate and keen to learn.
- Safeguarding is very strong and all staff are vigilant and confident in their roles of keeping pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe and happy at school and this view is supported by parents.
- The caring ethos of the school helps pupils develop into confident, responsible, tolerant and caring individuals.
- Early years provision for children in the Reception classes is good. Children are happy and enjoy coming to school. They make good progress from their starting points.
- The outdoor provision in the Reception classes is not as effective as the indoor environment in engaging children in their learning.
- Most pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve their work, but teachers do not consistently use the school's marking policy to enable pupils to understand the next steps in their learning.
- Although individual pupils' progress is closely tracked, leaders do not track the progress of groups of pupils, such as those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or the most able pupils. Governors are not aware of how much progress these groups make and so do not fully hold leaders to account.
- Progress at key stage 1 is variable, particularly in phonics for disadvantaged pupils. Progress at the end of key stage 1 has been slow in reading, writing and mathematics, but is accelerating for current pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve strategies for the monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress and attendance so that:
 - middle leaders, senior leaders and governors know how well groups of pupils, such as pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able pupils, are progressing
 - governors rigorously hold leaders to account for the progress of pupils across all year groups
 - the impact of interventions to improve the attendance of vulnerable groups can be evaluated.
- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the new assessment system is consistently well established, not only in reading, writing and mathematics but across all subjects
 - teachers providing consistently high levels of challenge to move the most able pupils on even more rapidly
 - leaders ensuring that teachers use the school's marking policy more consistently to help pupils to improve their work.
- Improve the quality of enhancements in the outdoor learning space in the early years by providing children with an inspiring environment which encourages them to extend their learning effectively.
- Improve outcomes for key stage 1 pupils in phonics, reading, writing and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher's determined and inspiring leadership has ensured that the school continues to build on its successes and has sustained a good quality of education. The headteacher is ably supported by a very strong deputy headteacher and a committed and dedicated governing body. Together, they are ambitious for all pupils.
- The headteacher and his deputy have the full confidence of staff, parents and pupils. Staff are highly committed, knowledgeable and caring. They work together effectively to provide a welcoming and supportive school.
- Staff and governors promote equality of opportunity well. Leadership of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of school life is very strong. As a result, pupils learn about different world religions and develop respect for other cultures. British values are well embedded within the school and pupils are taught the values of respect, democracy, the rule of law and tolerance. Pupils leave the school well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Effective systems are in place to manage the performance of teachers, and targets are linked to the school's improvement priorities. Staff are supported well by senior leaders and value the wide range of training opportunities. Newly qualified teachers say they enjoy working at the school, feel well supported by all staff and are trained and mentored effectively.
- Leaders and governors use the pupil premium funding well to support disadvantaged pupils. Extra support, both academically and socially, provides help for those who need it and is well targeted. For example, additional support in small groups with teaching assistants is provided alongside an after-school nurture club, the sunflower club, to develop confidence and self-esteem. The impact of these interventions is evident in the progress being made by disadvantaged pupils, which is in line with, and sometimes above, the progress being made by their peers.
- Sport premium funding is used to good effect. Pupils are involved in a wide range of sports and physical activity. They take part in sporting competitions and enjoy after-school clubs, such as zumba.
- Leaders have responded effectively to national changes in how pupils' progress is assessed. They have developed a system based on expectations of progress related to pupils' age, and assessments are checked through consulting other staff in the cluster of local schools. The school recognises that more work needs to be done to develop the system across the wider curriculum and to track and monitor the progress of different groups of pupils. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities form one such group. There are good examples of these pupils being well supported as a result of additional funding provided to the school, but the school's monitoring of groups requires further development to enable a more precise evaluation of the impact of funding to be made.
- Leaders provide high-quality training for teachers, which is focused on improving teaching and learning. Training is valued by teachers and supports them in achieving excellent key stage 2 outcomes for pupils.

- Although leaders are improving progress for current pupils in key stage 1, leaders are aware that more rapid progress needs to be secured, so that pupils make progress more in line with that of their peers nationally from similar starting points. Pupils' achievement also needs to improve so that more pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, achieve the required standard in the Year 1 phonics check.
- Teachers do not apply the school's agreed marking and feedback policy consistently. As a result, some work is not corrected and some pupils do not have a clear idea of how to move their learning forward.
- Leaders and staff have worked hard to improve the attendance of the potentially more vulnerable pupils. Strong relationships are developed with families and some signs of improvement are being seen, but there is not enough improvement in the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The local authority adviser has a good overview of the school's performance and provides useful advice and guidance to the school during his visits.
- Safeguarding is a strength of the school, as is the culture of care and support for all pupils and their families. Leaders are quick to identify any families needing support and signpost them to external agencies that can support them. Parents appreciate the extra support offered by the school, particularly around bereavement and the nurturing of pupils with lower self-esteem and confidence.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school and its leadership. For example, one parent stated: 'The leadership of the school is second-to-none. The headmaster cares deeply about the welfare of the pupils and staff and this is reflected by all senior staff and the governing body.'

Governance of the school

- Governors know the school well. They have a good understanding of its strengths and what it needs to do to improve further.
- Governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Each governor is linked to a year group or subject and meets regularly with staff to gain a full insight into their work. Governors carry out their own reviews of school life, suggest improvements to areas and check on the progress of these at a later date.
- Governors have worked closely with the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that safety is a top priority of the school and they are effective in supporting leaders.
- Governors ask questions and challenge leaders. They receive information about pupils' attainment but do not always have the detailed information required to hold leaders firmly to account regarding progress of groups of pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in school. Staff are exceptionally well trained and as a result all staff are fully aware of their responsibilities in ensuring pupils are safe. They carry out their roles with vigilance and care.
- The following up of any concerns or incidents is extremely thorough. Strong relationships with external agencies and involvement in inter-agency projects ensure that pupils are safe and their welfare needs are met.
- Leadership of this area is strong and staff develop positive, trusting relationships with

families. All records and checks are carried out thoroughly and recorded appropriately.

- Parents overwhelmingly feel that the school is caring and welcoming. They appreciate how approachable staff are and feel that parents and pupils are listened to. They say that they 'trust the school implicitly' and 'have complete confidence in the school to look after the best interests of their child'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Positive and warm relationships between staff and pupils are a strength of the school. Pupils show good levels of engagement and want to do well in their learning. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and pupils respond well to this, demonstrating exceptionally good attitudes to learning from Reception classes up to Year 6.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use it well to plan enjoyable activities. Pupils told inspectors how much they enjoy their lessons and parents agree with their views. Several parents commented on how keen their children were about sharing their new knowledge with them.
- Teachers use questioning well to help pupils to grasp concepts and overcome any misconceptions. When opportunities are given to enable pupils to develop their reasoning skills and think more deeply, for example in a mathematics lesson about coordinates, pupils share ideas and resources cooperatively, practise new concepts and check their own work.
- The school's improvement priority of developing a 'growth mindset' with pupils is developing the resilience of pupils and is having a positive impact on their attitudes to learning. When asked which subject they enjoyed most, a Year 6 pupil told inspectors that he enjoyed mathematics as his teacher 'helps him to persevere'. Parents also value the skills developed by this approach, commenting 'We have been particularly impressed with this year's focus on growth mindset as this has added an extra dimension to the way our children overcome hurdles that they find tricky both inside and outside of school.'
- While teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are very high, sometimes the work set, particularly for the most able, does not challenge pupils sufficiently to make the progress of which they are capable. On occasions, stretch and challenge are limited, particularly in key stage 1.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They often support small groups outside the classroom to focus on particular skills and also support individuals in class. Effective small-group work was observed in phonics, where there was a high level of challenge and progress was clearly seen in writing. On occasions, teaching assistants do not reinforce terminology that pupils need to know and this reduces the impact of their teaching on pupils' learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school is a warm and welcoming community where adults and pupils treat each other with respect and fairness. Diversity is promoted well throughout the school and as a result there is a culture of intolerance among pupils to any type of prejudicial behaviour. Indeed, pupils go out of their way to make everyone feel welcome and accepted. For example, one pupil has tried to learn a foreign language so that she can help a pupil who is due to join the class who speaks English as an additional language.
- Pupils are eager to talk about their positive experiences and told inspectors how safe and happy they are. Pupils are adamant that bullying occurs very rarely and are confident that any instances are dealt with swiftly. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, both personally and online. Older pupils talk confidently about cyber bullying and the dangers of the internet.
- Pupils have a keen awareness of how to keep themselves healthy. There are displays of pupils' work around the school, encouraging their peers to bring healthy snacks to school. The school council has written about healthy lunchbox choices in the school newsletter and the school canteen also supports pupils to make positive choices through the wide variety of salad and fruit available.
- There is a wide variety of activities and clubs for pupils, which extends their learning experiences. Pupils talk very positively about residential opportunities they can attend, and the many trips on offer, for example to a local mosque, temple and church. Links with Bolton University, through the Children's University, develop pupils' enthusiasm for learning. As a result, older pupils talk confidently about their ambitions for the future and discuss going to university.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Behaviour is exceptional in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand, remember and live the 'golden rules' for behaviour. Pupils discuss expectations in personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education and circle time. Pupils are clear on the incentives to behave and the consequences of their behaviour.
- Pupils have high expectations of themselves, both academically and socially. They always try to do their best and achieve well by persevering, contributing to all areas of school life.
- During social time, pupils behave well and play cooperatively with each other. At lunchtime, pupils line up in an orderly manner for equipment and share and take turns well.
- Pupils are able to self-regulate their behaviour and are proud of their school. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils take great pride in their work, are willing to improve and respond very well to the positive feedback they receive from adults.
- Pupils' attendance is in line with the national average for primary schools and is improving. Leaders and staff work closely with families to improve the attendance of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding and of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- The school rarely excludes pupils for poor behaviour and records show that good behaviour is the norm. Parents and staff also commend the excellent behaviour in school. As one parent said, 'My child absolutely loves going to Highfield. I really couldn't wish for a better school for him.'

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- For the last three years, Year 6 pupils have made outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Progress at the end of key stage 2 is very strong and this is reflected in the work of current learners seen in books and in lessons.
- Results in mathematics were below average for one group of pupils in 2016, but caution must be applied when making comparisons to national figures due to the small number of pupils involved. The school tracks the progress of individual pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities but their progress is not routinely tracked as a group so overall conclusions about progress as a cohort cannot be made by leaders. The school is addressing this issue with immediate effect.
- The progress of pupils in key stage 1 is now accelerating but in 2016 was significantly below average and has been stubbornly so for several years. Pupils' achievement as measured by the phonics check in Year 1 is still below the national average but is rising slowly year on year. Leaders are addressing the issue of disadvantaged pupils' weaker performance in phonics. By the end of Year 2, almost all pupils have caught up in phonics.
- Progress accelerates across key stage 2 and this can be seen in the books of pupils in most year groups. Disadvantaged pupils, including those who are also most able, make progress in line with their classmates and sometimes make even more rapid progress. Effective use of the pupil premium funding provides extra support for pupils identified as needing extra help so that they catch up quickly. Good-quality extra help is having a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils' progress and attainment.
- Provision for the most able pupils is generally good, but expectations are not always high enough. For example, in mathematics, some pupils are given tasks which are, on occasions, not challenging enough and some pupils find them too easy. As a result, learning for this group of pupils is sometimes not as rapid as it could be.
- Homework is set regularly and gives pupils the opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of topics covered in class. Some tasks also involve pupils researching new topics and the displays in corridors and classrooms celebrate the high-quality work produced by pupils.
- The majority of parents are happy with the communication provided by teachers about the progress of their children and pupils go home keen to share what they have learned in school that day.
- Reading is encouraged throughout the school and the majority of pupils enjoy reading. Pupils use the library often, including at lunchtimes. There is a range of books from favourite authors, classics, books about celebrating differences and books about inspirational figures such as Ellie Simmonds and Malala Yousafzi. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often, and to discuss their reading with others.
- Pupils at Highfield are very well prepared for secondary school. Their academic

achievements, together with their highly developed personal and social skills, ensure that they are well equipped to face the challenges of life at secondary school.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age in almost all areas of learning. This is particularly true for children's communication and language skills.
- Children make good progress, leaving Reception with skills slightly below those typically expected for their age. Current children are making good progress from their starting points and most are on track to be ready for Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is good and is focused on improving outcomes for all children so that the numbers achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception continue to rise and at least match the national figure.
- Teachers have a deep knowledge of individual children and this helps to ensure that their needs are well met. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly track the progress of children, quickly giving extra support to those who need it. However, there is little evidence of how staff track which areas children are choosing across the provision to further inform their assessments of children's progress. The assessments are also not being used consistently to provide suitably challenging activities for all children.
- Leaders swiftly identify children's personal needs and have strong and effective links with other professionals such as speech therapists and specialist teachers who provide outreach with individual children when appropriate.
- There are very good relationships with parents and almost all parents are happy with the start their children get in the early years at Highfield. Early years staff work to provide a smooth transition from home and Nursery prior to the children starting at the school.
- Parents are regularly invited to stay and play and they can also contribute to their children's ongoing assessments. Parents are invited to events to support their children in reading and writing. Leaders use part of the pupil premium funding to provide resources for activities such as play bags to be used by families at home.
- There is a calm and well-organised atmosphere in Reception classes. The indoor learning environment is purposeful and supports effective learning. However, the outdoor space is underdeveloped and does not consistently engage and stimulate the interest of children and encourage them to extend their learning in the outdoor area. Leaders are well aware that at present there are too few opportunities for effective outdoor learning, and plans are in place to address this.
- Children are extremely well behaved and follow instructions quickly. Children move around their indoor and outdoor areas sensibly and have a very positive attitude to learning. Occasionally, the level of purposeful learning taking place is reduced when questioning is not as effective or when resources are not fully prepared, and then children lose interest and change quickly to other activities.
- The positive and warm relationships between staff and children help the children to develop emotionally and socially. Children play happily together or alongside their

peers. Children share resources well and without any inappropriate behaviour. For example, when completing a number activity using the computer, one child was working out the answers to the sums, while another child typed them in and a third child gave positive feedback for correct answers.

- All adults make sure that children are safe. Staff are trained in all aspects of safeguarding and welfare arrangements are strong. Healthy food provided for snacks and lunches encourages children to make positive choices.

School details

Unique reference number	105182
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10003316

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	408
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Cooper
Headteacher	Mr D Glyn-Jones
Telephone number	01204 571749
Website	www.highfield.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@highfield.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 February 2012

Information about this school

- Highfield Primary School is larger than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is lower than average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is in line with the national average.
- The early years provision comprises two Reception classes.
- The school runs a breakfast club.
- The school receives light support from the local authority.
- The school has gained the Eco-schools award, 2015 and the Healthy Schools Plus

award, 2016.

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the reading scheme used, full details on pupil premium strategy or 'the sustainability and impact on attainment of the sports funding' on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors met with pupils, both formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other leaders, newly qualified teachers, groups of pupils and governors. The lead inspector spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation that covered: information about pupils' attainment and progress; the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan; minutes of governing body meetings; and records relating to teaching and learning, pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding of pupils.
- Inspectors observed pupils at breaks, lunchtimes, during assembly and in lessons. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work in lessons and looked at a sample of their books.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents in the 22 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, as well as comments received via the free text facility on Parent View. Inspectors also took into account the 27 responses to a questionnaire for staff and the 97 responses to a questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors also spoke to parents informally on the playground.

Inspection team

Helen O'Neill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Beard	Ofsted Inspector
Clare McGarey	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine White	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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