

Highbury School

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

Inspection dates

2–3 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Leaders, governors and staff are highly committed to improving the life chances of pupils. They work together to successfully fulfil their ambitious expectations. They continually adapt to meet pupils' changing needs.
- The headteacher provides exceptional and dynamic leadership. She inspires all of those she works with to strive to be the very best.
- Leadership at all levels is strong and highly effective. Senior and middle leaders support the headteacher positively in the drive for excellence.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils. They are highly skilled in providing all pupils of differing abilities with significant challenge. This enables pupils to make rapid progress across all areas of the curriculum.
- Highly effective teaching and assessment systems and strategies are in place which consider specific pupils' needs. These support each pupil to learn successfully.
- Children in the early years provision are very happy. They are inquisitive about learning and blossom with the opportunities provided for them.
- The outstanding curriculum has been developed to be broad, balanced and personalised for each pupil. Pupils follow a pathway that is carefully tailored to their abilities and aspirations.
- Teaching assistants provide high levels of pastoral, nurture and academic support to pupils. Relationships with pupils are exceptionally strong. Staff care about their pupils and show genuine pride and delight when small steps are achieved.
- The behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around school is impeccable. Staff are highly skilled in supporting pupils to manage their own behaviour. Pupils are respectful, polite, friendly and happy. Pupils feel safe at school and this enables them to thrive.
- Governors are highly skilled and bring a wide breadth of experience that supports and challenges school leaders very well.
- Leaders are unwavering in their pursuit of increasing attendance. However, there is still some work to be carried out, particularly with those who take holidays in term time.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop attendance initiatives to increase attendance, particularly relating to those that take holidays in term time.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors are relentless in their ambition to make the school a centre of excellence for pupils. The headteacher is insistent that all aspects of school perform to the very highest standards. She leads with a determination to provide the best outcomes for pupils, their families and the staff.
- Leaders have created a warm and very welcoming school; they encourage every pupil and member of staff to fulfil their potential. The school's ethos of participate and achieve is fully reflected in all that they do. Highbury School is truly a place 'where pupils shine'.
- Leaders have developed remarkable systems and strategies that underpin all aspects of the school's work. This reflects leaders' deep and accurate understanding of the school.
- The headteacher encourages every member of staff to be a leader. Staff are set aspirational targets which contribute to school improvement. All staff have essential roles in developing and sustaining improvement.
- Leaders offer staff wide-ranging and well-thought-out training opportunities. These allow them to grow and develop professionally and to enhance the offer for pupils.
- Leaders have established a positive culture where they encourage staff to discuss, plan, design and implement systems that are bespoke to the school. These include the outstanding curriculum and the 'behaviour, objective, prompt' assessment system.
- The curriculum is a key strength of the school. It is highly personalised and is easily adapted to meet each pupil's specific needs. The curriculum encompasses national curriculum subjects and others specific to the school such as communication and personal development. Alongside this, pupils can access a wide array of high-quality support from medical professionals and other external partners.
- The curriculum is enriched with many additional opportunities that run throughout the school day. The garden school is used effectively to inspire and develop pupils' interests and skills. These include fine and gross motor skills, communication and a strong development of curiosity and enquiry. Pupils also experience other positive activities that enhance their learning including horse riding, dance, drama, music and a variety of sports-related activities.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is successfully embedded throughout the curriculum. Pupils develop resilience and are encouraged to display curiosity about the world. Some pupils can ask probing questions which enable them to further develop their understanding of people and the world.
- Highbury School works successfully with a range of external partners to enhance and support pupils. Highly positive relationships ensure that pupils engage quickly in therapy sessions. Health care professionals deliver programmes effectively, quickly demonstrating impact. Close contact with parents and carers means that strategies are shared and practised at home.
- School engages with parents positively. A variety of communication options are available enabling parents to contact staff at any time. Parents receive detailed and

regular reporting on their child's progress. Statutory reviews and plans produced are of very high quality. Highly appropriate targets are set which reflect well throughout pupils' daily learning.

- The clear majority of parents are extremely positive about the school. They note the positive changes that they see, and the high levels of progress pupils make. One parent commented, 'She is happy and likes going to school – no small measure due to her challenges, and no accident either with school ensuring that she is engaged, settled, safe and happy. The most is made of every single opportunity to teach her life skills, about the world, self-care, choices, to follow instructions, safety and communication.' This comment is typical of those received on Parent View, Ofsted's online parent survey.
- Leaders use additional funding for sports and physical education effectively to promote strong progress for all pupils. A considerable amount of sport and physical activities take place. Many new projects have been implemented, for example Bouncing Bodies, a programme of study specifically written by staff to utilise the new rebound room in the most effective way. Pupils take part in swimming, both in the school's therapy pool and sessions in the local authority swimming pool. Specialist physical education teachers provide well-planned and effective training to non-specialist teachers. This is a positive experience and offers insight into various aspects of the physical education curriculum.
- Pupils have access to bicycles to use on the new track. Bicycles are also accessible to wheelchair users. These have become a firm favourite with pupils, many of whom are experiencing riding a bike for the first time.

Governance of the school

- Governors have a clear and deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their knowledge, skills and expertise enable them to challenge and support leaders very well. Governors ensure that they receive high-quality, detailed and pertinent information from school leaders. They check this information rigorously by informed questioning, looking at evidence, regular visits to school, close links with staff and a comprehensive understanding of pupils and their needs. The senior leadership team openly encourage challenge by governors.
- Governors are dedicated to pupils, parents, staff and leaders of the school. They are extremely ambitious for all to be successful in everything they do. Governors work closely as a team. They have informed discussions, reflect and make accurate and meaningful decisions that benefit the school.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties with due diligence. They take part in regular training and have a deep understanding of safeguarding and the need to protect vulnerable pupils. They monitor the school's safeguarding policy and practice closely.
- Governors are uncompromising in their pursuit of progress. They focus on the development of the school. The chair of governors is highly effective in ensuring that governors support and have an impact on outcomes for pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have ensured that a strong culture of safeguarding permeates all areas of the school's work. Highly organised and very well-developed systems are in place. These systems impact strongly across the school to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Staff recruitment procedures are well managed. Staff carry out all relevant and necessary checks and record evidence clearly. Staff take part in a range of high-quality training regarding the safeguarding of pupils. The headteacher provides regular updates, which can be found throughout school. Staff report them to be informative and helpful.
- The school takes meaningful and appropriate steps to support pupils. Pupils have complete trust in staff and know that if they have any problems they have someone to talk to. They feel safe at school and know that they are well cared for.
- Staff are highly trained and skilled in supporting pupils' additional needs.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers and other staff are highly skilled in applying the needs-based approach to learning. Lessons in all subjects and in all classes are engaging and motivating. Teachers adapt lessons carefully to meet the varied learning needs of each pupil.
- Teachers and staff are extremely ambitious for their pupils. They are determined to equip them with skills that will contribute to a happy and fulfilled life.
- Staff prepare high-quality and bespoke resources which they use effectively to stimulate pupils' interest in learning. In lessons, pupils quickly become absorbed in the activities that staff design for them.
- Pupils are tremendously enthusiastic about learning. Where possible, they can speak at length about what they are learning and what they have already learned. Pupils enjoy all aspects of the curriculum and are excited to go into their classes when they arrive at school.
- Lessons are calm, ordered and purposeful. This encouraging learning environment has a positive impact on the engagement of pupils.
- Teachers plan highly organised, successful and valuable lessons which support strong and sustained progress for pupils. Support staff exhibit high levels of independence due to thorough direction and training. They use their expertise and deep understanding of pupils to adapt planning and restructure explanations where necessary.
- Pupils have a love of reading at this school. Reading takes place in many forms around school, whether it is individual reading or staff reading stories to pupils. Pupils who themselves are not able to read due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities take great delight in listening to stories read to them by staff. Those who can read show a depth of understanding of text. They can ask and answer questions about the text and can sometimes predict what will happen next.
- Work in books is neat and tidy, showing pride from both pupils and staff. Extensive

photographic evidence in books alongside pupils' work and meaningful commentary clearly shows the strong and sustained progress pupils are making.

- Long-term targets set in pupils' education, health and care plans are expertly broken down into smaller achievable targets. Pupils make frequent small steps of progress which over time enable them to achieve their overarching longer-term goals. Due to the regular and sustained small steps of progress, pupils' overall progress is very strong.
- Staff monitor pupils throughout each lesson. They quickly identify any misconceptions and use their expertise to explain and sensitively support pupils.
- The enormously positive relationships that exist between pupils and staff are key to the success of the pupils. There is a culture of mutual respect at the school that supports pupils in developing their confidence and optimism for learning.
- Staff work closely together to ensure that all lesson content is appropriate for each pupil dependent on their different needs and abilities. Pupils of different abilities all receive work that challenges them. Support is well placed but if pupils find the work too demanding interventions quickly occur and alternatives are used.
- Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties receive lessons based on sensory experiences with strong purposeful communication elements. Staff treat pupils sensitively, with understandable care and nurture.
- The school's own assessment systems are used to successfully monitor progress. The systems have been meticulously designed to enable flexibility across all areas of the curriculum, both academic and non-academic. Staff have a deep understanding of the systems and therefore can use them with great effectiveness to track the strong progress of pupils.
- Teachers are held stringently to account for the progress of their pupils. Senior leaders hold regular progress meetings with teachers. Pupils are individually discussed and further support or new initiatives or strategies are implemented.

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 works hard to provide high-quality and well-planned content in the curriculum. This enables pupils to have the correct skills, knowledge and understanding to live successful and rewarding lives.
- Pupils are confident learners. Positive relationships with staff and a love of their school enable them to succeed in lessons and make rapid progress in their personal development and communication skills.
- Leaders make sure that there are many opportunities for pupils to celebrate their achievements and receive recognition for their efforts.
- Assemblies and displays in classes and around school support teaching British values. The school council meets regularly and members report back to their classes using a

variety of communication devices.

- Pupils' welfare needs are addressed by the high-quality and wide-ranging support that they receive. Therapeutic specialist support is comprehensive and includes play therapy, music and occupational speech and language therapy. Leaders ensure that all additional needs are quickly identified, and professional support is put in place swiftly.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe in different situations. However, due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities they do rely on adults to keep them safe.
- Pupils say that there is no bullying at school and a review of school data reinforces this. They acknowledge that if bullying were to take place they would report it. They are confident that staff would deal with it effectively and quickly.
- Families receive support from the school in a timely way. Parents feel they can approach leaders and staff and ask for help and guidance when necessary. One parent states, 'the help offered to support parents is outstanding' and staff 'provide support over and above parents' expectations'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in classes and around school is impeccable. Pupils are polite and respectful to staff, visitors and each other. They display deeply caring attitudes for those who support them every day.
- Routines are quickly established, and pupils respond well to them. They understand the high expectations of behaviour and know that this is what helps them to learn well. Pupils can concentrate in lessons and no learning time is lost due to disturbance.
- Pupils understand the school rules and are experts in reward systems that are in place. Pupils work hard to achieve their rewards and are very proud to do so.
- Where pupils exhibit challenging behaviour due to their special educational needs and/or disabilities, staff respond quickly and implement additional support. Those pupils who previously struggled with challenging behaviour are now calm, settled and engaged in learning. Staff are expertly skilled in de-escalation methods and use these proactively to ensure that pupils are calm and happy. There have been no incidents of physical intervention this school year.
- Leaders' records show that behaviour and pupils' ability to self-regulate improves significantly the longer they have attended the school. Pupils communicate with staff in a variety of ways should they feel the need for additional support or quiet time. Some pupils can move themselves to quiet areas when necessary.
- Arrangements for welcoming pupils to school and leaving at the end of the day are extremely well organised and efficient. Pupils' attendance is slightly below the national average for all schools. Leaders work hard to encourage parents to ensure that their children attend school. Unfortunately, some continue to take their children on extended holidays during term time.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make fantastic progress throughout the school and across the curriculum.
- Pupils make consistently strong progress against ambitious targets set by staff and leaders.
- Leaders ensure that assessment processes are highly accurate, well moderated, monitored and understood by all. As a result, teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are reliable and accurate.
- Pupils make rapid progress across all areas of the curriculum, including English and mathematics. Thorough monitoring of progress by staff ensures that at the first sign of any concerns additional support is put in place.
- Subject leaders have deep subject knowledge. They have a firm grasp on the effectiveness of teaching. They monitor and address any issues immediately in a supportive and reassuring manner. Constant review and improvements enable the school to offer high-quality subject content.
- Most pupils make excellent progress in reading. They enjoy reading for pleasure and can read confidently to adults and their peers.
- All groups of pupils make equally strong progress. This include disadvantaged pupils and those who have a variety of special educational needs and/or disabilities. All pupils receive high-quality support.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education. This begins in Year 5 with an introduction to high school and invitations to a variety of events. Year 6 parents and pupils receive a full package of meetings and visits, including sports tournaments. Year 6 pupils attend their high school one day a week in their final term at Highbury School.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leaders have put in place rigorous measures for pupils to transition into the school. Visits, meetings and valid assessments take place to prepare children and parents during what can be a difficult and worrying time. This information builds an extensive picture that is used effectively by staff to plan and tailor support for children.
- Robust systems ensure that staff are well prepared for children on their arrival. Children's special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully planned for. This means that children settle quickly to the routines and high expectations of the school.
- Leaders are highly ambitious for the early years children. They acknowledge that getting things right at this stage will enable them to progress well throughout the school.
- The early years leader has recently focused on transforming the provision to meet the changing needs of current children. She has planned and overseen positive changes in learning environments, resources, record-keeping and the planned curriculum.
- Staff are highly trained and dedicated, and have a deep understanding of the children. Staff deployment changes have seen positive results. Children quickly get to know all

staff and rapidly build positive relationships which are key within this school.

- Children have access to all areas of the curriculum throughout the day. Experienced staff guide children in their choices to prevent them becoming fixated with one particular task or activity.
- Staff plan the use of outdoor learning spaces effectively to promote different aspects of the curriculum, including English, mathematics and science.
- Personal development is very strong in the early years with an emphasis on social skills and interaction with others. Dedicated time each day is given to enhancing and developing gross motor skills. Children take part in well-planned sensory and communication activities.
- Teachers ensure that all work is accurately planned to meet the individual needs of children. High-quality resources and accurate sensory support materials are used to enhance the learning opportunities.
- Children make strong and sustained progress. Staff observe closely and capture significant moments of progress.
- Early years leaders ensure that staff chart children's progress in detail, with every small step of progress recorded. Photographic evidence alongside meaningful commentary plots the very strong progress children make.
- Children take great delight in joining in activities with staff. They enjoy these experiences and are confident with adults.
- Staff support children sensitively with medical and health care needs. Robust systems are in place to ensure that all statutory welfare requirements are in place.

School details

Unique reference number	107591
Local authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	10054549

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	79
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stella Spencer
Headteacher	Debbie Sweet
Telephone number	01484 716 319
Website	www.highburyschool.co.uk/home
Email address	admin@highbury.calderdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2018

Information about this school

- Highbury School is a generic special school which caters for children with a wide range of learning needs and/or disabilities and whose needs cannot be fully met within a mainstream setting. These include those with autistic spectrum conditions, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. All pupils have an education, health and care plan.
- There are currently no pupils who are two years old at the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support provided by the pupil premium is higher than average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors undertook observations of learning in all classes alongside school leaders. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in and around school, including at lunchtime. They observed the systems in place for pupils arriving at school and leaving at the end of the day.
- Pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups was scrutinised.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, middle leaders, governors, staff, the local authority representative and two therapists working at the school.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documents including the school's plan for development, self-evaluation, minutes of governors' meetings and information about pupils' progress and achievement.
- Inspectors considered 22 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 18 comments made by parents on Ofsted's free-text service. Inspectors also took account of 30 responses to the online questionnaire for staff.
- Inspectors looked at safeguarding and behaviour and attendance documents.
- Inspectors met formally with a group of pupils and spoke informally to pupils around school and in classes.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors reviewed information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Sara Roe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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