

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Highbury School

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

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

## **Outcome**

Highbury School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is an inspirational school. The experience for pupils at Highbury School is one of joy and happiness. There is an overwhelming atmosphere of care and respect throughout the school. Pupils feel safe and benefit from the rich array of experiences that are planned in the school curriculum.

All pupils at Highbury School have an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Leaders consider these plans carefully to tailor an ambitious curriculum for each pupil. This is true across all aspects of provision, from the satellite sites in local primary schools to the expanding early years provision and the well-established main school site.

During the inspection, pupils were excited to tell inspectors about the upcoming celebration day. They talk happily about the friends they make at school and the 'adventures' that they go on. The relationships between staff and pupils are warm and caring. Behaviour across the site is superb because all adults adopt consistent approaches to supporting pupils. Adults know and understand pupils well. Pupils flourish as a result. One parent typified the view held by inspectors when they said, 'The school is a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.'

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

The curriculum at Highbury School is carefully constructed to ensure that all pupils are considered. The overarching curriculum is carefully broken down. Staff select the knowledge, vocabulary and activity choices that will best meet the needs of the children they teach. For example, in reading lessons, adults might teach the school's phonics programme. For pupils not yet ready to access this programme, a curriculum based around phonological awareness is planned and taught. This helps all pupils move towards reading fluency.

Pupils' social development is at the heart of everything the school does. For example, 'fun with food' sessions ensure pupils encounter food of different types. In early years, this is

skilfully woven into the provision. This helps pupils develop healthy attitudes to different types of food. Careful cross-curricular links are made so that what pupils learn can be applied to real-life situations. For example, learning about money in mathematics is connected to personal, social and health education (PSHE) when pupils visit and buy ingredients from a shop to make a cake.

The design of the school environment immerses pupils in language and routines. This helps them develop socially and academically. In the early years setting, for example, teachers consider the mobility, sensory and developmental needs of pupils. Staff ensure that each classroom has exactly the right provision for the pupils in that class. Across the different sites, the school is relentless in its commitment to ensuring education is precisely matched to pupils' needs.

The behaviour strategy in school is exceptional. Leaders work carefully to identify the causes of any behaviour that acts as a barrier to learning. The behaviour and therapeutic teams' clear actions support positive change for pupils. Parents also enjoy drop-in sessions and behaviour support events. This ensures that they understand the work of the school and can support school approaches at home. Many parents told inspectors of the positive impact this work has had on both family life and academic achievement for their children. This helps pupils to attend regularly.

All staff model positive behaviours and use consistent language with pupils. Classrooms feature 'objects of reference', pictures and signs to help pupils to learn how best communicate their needs and feelings. Beyond this, pupils benefit from lessons in the school's swimming pool. They also go rock climbing and horse riding. Social times, such as lunchtime and the arrival at school, are just as carefully planned as structured lessons. For example, staff expertly involve pupils with mobility difficulties in games at lunchtime. Staff greet pupils with warmth, friendliness and care as they arrive at school. Pupils respond excitedly to staff welcoming them.

The school constantly strives to find new ways to meet the diverse range of needs of pupils at the school. For example, for those pupils who are ready, the satellite provisions provide access to a mainstream setting. Here, pupils can develop social skills that might be harder to foster on the main school site. The school's internal 'alternative provision' is designed to help those pupils who find it hard to work in larger groups.

Staff well-being underpins the sense of community and collegiality that pervades the school. Staff can access sessions with therapeutic staff to talk about their work. These sessions are highly valued. Staff welcome professional conversations with leaders about the pupils they teach. In turn, leaders trust teachers and support them to develop professionally. These positive relationships benefit pupils in the classroom. Governors are proud of the school and of their part in it. Recently, for example, the early years provision has expanded rapidly. Leaders, including governors, have worked together to ensure that buildings, curriculum design and teaching have been able to meet growing demand with no disruption to the quality of provision for pupils.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in October 2018.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107591
<b>Local authority</b>	Calderdale
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297217
<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Community special
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	139
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Stuart Henbest
<b>Headteacher</b>	Debbie Sweet
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highburyschool.co.uk">www.highburyschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Highbury School is a special school which caters for children with a wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities. This includes pupils with autistic spectrum disorders, profound and multiple learning difficulties, physical disabilities and sensory impairments. All pupils at the school have an EHC plan.
- The school has three satellite provisions based in local primary schools. The pupils who attend this provision remain on the roll of Highbury School but attend some lessons in the mainstream settings to which they are attached.
- The school has recently undergone a rapid expansion in the number of pupils on roll to meet the demand for places at special schools in the local area.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school’s education provision.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and the wider senior leadership team of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils’ interests first.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PSHE. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils’ work.
- Inspectors also reviewed the curriculums for science and history.
- Inspectors met leaders for the early years and satellite provisions and visited all satellite sites.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for behaviour and attendance and spoke to therapy and medical professionals who work at the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of governors, and spoke with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors also observed pupils’ arrival at school and social times.
- Inspectors toured the school site.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and considered responses to the staff and pupil questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Matthew Vellensworth, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Michele Costello

Ofsted Inspector

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