

**HIGHFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Shortlands, Bromley

LEA area: Bromley

Unique reference number: 101664

Headteacher: Mr P Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr J Tyler  
20506

Date of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 189065

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Hill Road Shortlands Bromley Kent
Postcode:	BR2 0RL
Telephone number:	0208 460 2597
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R G Hunt
Date of previous inspection:	30 <sup>th</sup> April 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Highfield Junior School is an above average size for schools of the same type. The 381 pupils are organised into twelve classes. The school is set in an area that is primarily private residential housing. About 5% of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The number of girls and boys is broadly balanced. For nearly 5% of pupils, English is an additional language and this is above the national average. There are 78 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, giving a proportion that is broadly average. Pupils enter the school with attainment in national assessments that is on balance, well above national averages in English and mathematics.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides an environment in which pupils work hard and attain standards that are well above national averages. Most pupils achieve well because the overall quality of teaching is good. However, a minority of pupils, who are higher and lower attainers, are not consistently achieving as well as they could because teachers' planning does not take enough account of their precise needs. Standards of behaviour are particularly good, and pupils' attitudes and personal development are also positive features of the school. The curriculum is broad and well planned. The school is well led and soundly managed though development planning is not fully effective. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science.
- The school's ethos successfully encourages pupils to behave very well, work hard, and become responsible and independent.
- Teachers set high expectations for the majority of pupils and teach basic skills well.
- There is a broad, well-planned curriculum with good links between subjects.

#### **What could be improved**

- A minority of pupils, who are higher and lower attainers, are not consistently achieving as well as they could.
- Planning for the school's development is not sufficiently focused to bring about improvements as effectively as possible.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Since the school was inspected in 1996, standards in English, mathematics and science have remained well above average, rising in line with the national trend. There have been recent, significant improvements in accommodation. There have been improvements in the way that the school evaluates its own performance. In response to the action points from the last inspection, the quality of teaching is now more consistent, staff have received valuable training to improve the teaching of music, and parents receive better information about what is taught. Too little progress has been made toward some action points: teachers planning for the full breadth of pupils' abilities, making use of assessment information to plan further work, improving extended writing, enabling all parents to feel well informed about their children's progress. Overall, therefore, the school has not improved as much as it could.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A	A	A
science	A	A	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that the school's results are well above national averages and those for schools with similar socio-economic circumstances. In 1999, a significant number of pupils attained the higher Level 5 and very few attained below the expected Level 4. Standards have consistently risen since 1996, in line with the national trend of improvement. The school has set appropriate targets for the number of pupils who should attain Level 4 in national assessments, achieved them last year and is likely to do so this year.

In the work seen, standards were well above national expectations in English, mathematics and science. A minority of pupils, who are higher attainers, are not achieving as highly as they could because they are not sufficiently challenged. A minority, who are lower-attaining pupils, do not always make enough progress because the initial expectation is too high and so they do not sufficiently reinforce ideas before moving on to the next step. However, the majority of pupils are achieving well because teachers set work at a level that is generally above what is expected nationally. English skills are developed well, but there is insufficient extended writing and re-drafting of work, though the school is now taking steps to develop these aspects. Inspectors noted a lot of good work in art and design and technology, and the school has a good record in competitive sports.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	In lessons, most pupils are interested and involved. They concentrate hard, listen well and follow instructions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good both in lessons and at other times of the school day. Pupils are courteous and thoughtful of others.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils are responsible and independent. When asked to, they work together well. Pupils care for each other. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Attendance is good, and this helps pupils in their learning. There is very little unauthorised absence.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The overall quality of teaching is good. Teachers set high expectations for the majority of pupils. However, their planning is not sufficiently based on day-to-day assessment information, and does not take enough account of the

needs of the minority of pupils who are higher and lower attainers. Pupils are strongly encouraged to work hard and respond very positively, showing concentration and considerable effort. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching, so that they are able to give clear explanations and ask effective questions. This was particularly evident in the English and mathematics lessons seen, when pupils learned basic skills well.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and there are good links between subjects. Classes within the same year group plan together for consistency. A few pupils miss important parts of lessons when they are withdrawn for other work. The physical education curriculum does not include swimming. The implementation of the national literacy strategy has been very successful.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is not enough use of diagnostic assessment to identify pupils' precise needs. Work set within normal lessons does not always match their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, and this is strongly appreciated by parents. Pupils are not only taught how to behave well, but also why. Spiritual and cultural aspects are developed satisfactorily.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know pupils well and there are good systems for ensuring that they are well cared for. Pupils receive consistent guidance about how to behave well. Attendance registers are not always called when they should be.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is strong and purposeful. Subject co-ordinators are effective in supporting colleagues. The school is soundly managed, though there are some inconsistencies in the way that policies are implemented.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are knowledgeable about the day-to-day life of the school and fulfil their responsibilities appropriately.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has begun to evaluate its performance methodically but weaknesses in the school development plan reduce the effectiveness of this work. Development targets are not always focused on the most important issues.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of its financial and other resources. Learning resources are used well in lessons. The principles of best value are used when considering spending priorities.



## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Their children enjoy school.</li> <li>♦ Behaviour is very good and pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>♦ The school is approachable when they have questions or concerns.</li> <li>♦ Teaching is good, with high expectations.</li> <li>♦ The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ The amount and type of homework that is set.</li> <li>♦ Information about their children's progress.</li> <li>♦ The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection broadly agrees with parents' positive views and some of the concerns. Homework is consistent throughout the school and is usually relevant and useful. In almost all classes, parents are kept well informed about their children's progress, but this is a weakness in a minority of classes. Opportunities for extra-curricular activities are better than in most schools. Teachers' expectations are generally high for the majority of pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

#### **Standards are well above national averages in English, mathematics and science.**

1. In the 1999 national assessments for eleven-year-olds, attainment was well above national averages in English, mathematics and science. A significant proportion of pupils reached the higher Level 5, especially in mathematics and science. Over the last few years, the school's results have risen in line with the national trend.

2. In English, the basic skills of reading and writing are developed particularly well. Pupils read widely and talk knowledgeably about authors and different types of books. Older pupils refer to the text when discussing characters and events. They have good understanding of text, and higher attainers draw inferences. Pupils use reference books for English and other subjects. Some older pupils used dictionaries efficiently during a literacy hour and others, in Year 3, used information books to help them learn about the ancient Egyptians. Pupils use writing in many different ways such as for imaginative stories, poems, descriptions, letters, and diaries. They use punctuation well and have good understanding of the structure and conventions of writing. For example, older pupils accurately use commas and speech marks, and write in paragraphs. The standard of spelling is very good. Pupils often use complex words and think carefully about spelling rules and patterns. Handwriting is neat and pupils generally present work that looks attractive and is set out well.

3. In mathematics lessons, pupils are good at using their knowledge of numbers to help with mental calculations. For example, Year 5 pupils confidently solved three-digit addition and subtraction problems mentally, and then explained their different methods. Some Year 3 pupils double three-digit numbers in their heads. Older pupils solve problems involving fractions and percentages using standard forms of recording. They calculate the area of shapes, using their number skills, and draw and measure angles accurately. Pupils draw graphs from tables of results and interpret them well. They use and apply mathematics very effectively in other subjects.

4. Pupils have very good scientific knowledge. A particular strength is the way that this is developed through experimental and investigative work so that they also have a very good understanding of what they have learned. Pupils in Year 4 carried out experiments to find out the transparency of a range of materials. Their ability to predict outcomes accurately improved noticeably as they gained an understanding of what properties affect the transmission of light. Older pupils make sensible suggestions about how to carry out experiments, including how to ensure that variables are reduced and appropriate methods of communicating results.

#### **The school's ethos successfully encourages pupils to behave very well, work hard, and become responsible and independent.**

5. All adults in the school set high expectations for behaviour and pupils respond very positively. They are not only taught how to behave but also why. Some pupils running in a corridor were told to walk and then asked why this was preferable. When they had explained the need for safety and courtesy the teacher praised them and they were pleased to be doing the right thing. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and take turns to speak. They fetch resources and return to their seats without fuss, and clear away sensibly at the end of lessons. Pupils settle quickly to tasks, which are usually explained clearly by teachers. Their concentration is very good. In a Year 4 literacy lesson, the class worked hard at various written tasks while the teacher taught some lower-attaining pupils how to use a thesaurus. They were not disturbed by the discussion and made good progress.

6. Pupils are expected to treat people and property with respect and do so. They are courteous and friendly. Artefacts and apparatus can be included in classroom displays or used in lessons because pupils treat them carefully. In science lessons, for example, older pupils used stopwatches sensibly and younger pupils made little mess as they investigated dissolving. Many pupils bring books or artefacts to school to share with their class and this enriches everyone's experiences. A large number of pupils belong to clubs and show great enthusiasm. Some of them take part in competitive sports and work hard for the team as

well as their own success. Though a small number of pupils react to sporting success by behaving in an elitist way, the majority are confident and proud, but with pride more in their team than themselves. The extent to which pupils are prepared to work independently is seen in the standard reached by some who receive instrumental music lessons. When encouraged to do so, some pupils carry out extensive research at home.

**Teachers set high expectations for the majority of pupils and teach basic skills well.**

7. The overall quality of teaching is good. In the lessons seen, teaching was judged to be good or better in over half and very good in one fifth. The quality of teaching is a significant factor in pupils reaching the standards seen in national assessments and in their positive attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in ensuring that teaching is more consistent.

8. Teachers set high expectations for what the majority of pupils should achieve in their work. Work in English, mathematics and science, for example, is usually set at a level that is significantly above the expectation for average pupils of the age group. In a Year 3 literacy lesson, the teacher used challenging words such as 'disconsolate' and 'predicament' and ensured that pupils understood how to use them. In a few particularly successful lessons, teachers set some work at an even more challenging level for the higher attainers and this greatly enhanced their learning. Lower-attaining pupils were sometimes supported with work that started at a slightly lower level, to give them a chance to revise and reinforce what had been learned previously. This effectively helped them to understand the new ideas. Teachers often display the learning objectives for a lesson and sometimes refer to these as the lesson progresses. This helped pupils to focus on the important issues. At the end of some lessons, the teacher asked pupils whether they felt that they had met the objectives, which offered further opportunities to reinforce what had been learned.

9. Basic skills such as knowing letter sounds, alphabetical order, number facts and specific subject vocabulary are taught well. Teachers are good at ensuring that literacy and numeracy skills are practised, both in these lessons and other subjects. Many teachers mark pupils' work very well, offering useful guidance and posing valuable questions to which pupils respond positively. Some pupils used the teacher's comments about their science work to make spelling corrections and improve their conclusions.

10. A factor that helps teachers to challenge pupils is their own knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching. This enables teachers to give clear explanations and examples that help pupils to understand what they are learning. They often ask questions that check and extend pupils' understanding. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher did not ask simply 'What is area?' but 'When would you use area?' This was a more effective approach because it made pupils think about the underlying purpose and application of the skills they were learning.

**There is a broad, well-planned curriculum with good links between subjects.**

11. The curriculum covers all the subjects of National Curriculum and religious education. It is broadened through the teaching of French, a range of extra-curricular activities and instrumental music teaching. Creative aspects of learning are given appropriate emphasis, and inspectors noted a lot of good art work and design and technology products. These help to provide colourful, stimulating and interactive displays around the school. Although too few lessons were seen to make judgements about physical education, the school has a good reputation in competitive sports that stems from a combination of work in lessons and extra-curricular activities.

12. Schemes of work ensure that knowledge and skills are developed systematically. Teachers in the same year group plan together so that different classes are taught the same things. In the most successful year-planning, teachers talk through their ideas in detail and this helps to increase teachers' expertise as well as giving good consistency. The implementation of the national literacy strategy has been particularly effective and the school has made a good start with the numeracy strategy. Teachers have received valuable training and been successful in applying the methods and structure in literacy and numeracy hours, and in other subjects.

13. There are good links between subjects that help to make lessons interesting and purposeful, and give opportunities for skills to be reinforced. As part of their work in design and technology, for instance, one

year group made musical instruments and then used them to make music. In a literacy hour, pupils studied a book that extended their historical understanding of life in the early part of the last century. Pupils of all ages use mathematical skills in science, for example, when recording results in tables and drawing and interpreting graphs.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**A minority of pupils, who are higher and lower attainers, are not consistently achieving as well as they could.**

14. In most lessons seen, teachers set high expectations for the majority of pupils, but in too many their expectations were inappropriate for the minority who are higher and lower attainers. The school has a policy of forming withdrawal groups for some of these pupils, which provide valuable support and extension opportunities. However, the work is not linked to other lessons and does not sufficiently make up for the fact that, in many lessons, work does not match pupils' needs. The inspection found that a very significant proportion of previously completed work was set at the same level, whatever the prior attainment of the pupils. In mathematics, for example, the same problems were often presented to pupils of all abilities. The higher attainers completed a greater quantity than most pupils but did not extend their learning to a higher level: the lower attainers struggled to understand and did not effectively reinforce what had been learned.

15. The most important factor in this is that teachers do not make best use of assessment information when planning lessons. This weakness was identified during the previous inspection and the school has made insufficient improvement. Assessments throughout the year provide useful information about pupils' attainment, but teachers do not use this effectively when planning work. Although pupils' work is usually marked thoroughly, the information gathered is insufficiently used to influence planning for the next step in learning. Teachers in the same year group plan jointly so that the workload is reduced and there is consistency in what is taught. However, teachers do not always consider in enough detail how these plans can best be used to meet the needs of specific groups of pupils.

**Planning for the school's development is not sufficiently focused to bring about improvements as effectively as possible.**

16. Since the previous inspection there have been a significant number of changes in the school: half the staff, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher, building works, the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, and changing from Grant Maintained to Foundation status. These changes have been managed well, but the action points from the last inspection have only been partly met.

17. The present system of school development planning sets out targets for different aspects of the school such as subjects, premises and staffing. Individual governors, teachers and support staff have different ideas about what are the most important issues for the school. This lack of clarity and shared understanding has meant that, to some extent, external initiatives have pushed aside the school's objectives, rather than being used as vehicles for meeting them. For example, the national literacy strategy has been very successfully introduced but has not been used as a specific opportunity to improve teachers' use of assessment.

18. Parts of the school development plan are not precise enough, such as in the means of achieving the target and the time scale for change. Many success criteria are not sufficiently measurable and the school's main priorities are not always effectively linked into other targets. For instance, the target to develop a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and review system has the success criterion that 'the vision and aims of the school are met.' This is not as useful as linking the success of the new system to standards in subjects that are priorities for development, for example, or to improvements in the quality of teaching.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

The school should now:

- (i) ensure that the needs of pupils of all abilities are met in normal lessons by:
  - ♦ using assessment information more effectively to plan further work;
  - ♦ setting extension work for higher attainers that is at a higher level;
  - ♦ giving lower attainers better opportunities to revise and reinforce what has been learned;
  
- (ii) improve planning for the school's development by:
  - ♦ ensuring that there is a shared understanding of priorities;
  - ♦ linking targets so that they support each other;
  - ♦ setting more precise tasks and time scales and measurable success criteria.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	19
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	21	32	42	5	0	0

*The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	381
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	18

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	78

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	17

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	26
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	51	45	96

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	48	47	49
	Girls	44	39	44
	Total	92	86	93
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96	90	97
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	44	45	48
	Girls	40	38	41
	Total	84	83	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88	86	93
	National	68	69	75

***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No. of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	328
Any other minority ethnic group	43

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

***Exclusions in the last school year***

None
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## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	31.8

### Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37.5

## Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	752,762
Total expenditure	753,446
Expenditure per pupil	1,977
Balance brought forward from previous year	59,848
Balance carried forward to next year	59,164

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

381

Number of questionnaires returned

224

### Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	39	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	51	8	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	52	1	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	46	22	6	1
The teaching is good.	42	49	6	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	48	21	3	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	36	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	4	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	34	46	13	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	54	40	3	2	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	54	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	42	17	4	4

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.