



Highfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102407
LEA Hillingdon LEA
Inspection number 276712
Inspection dates 13 October 2005 to 14 October 2005
Reporting inspector Raminder Arora AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Charville Lane West
School category	Community		Hillingdon
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Uxbridge, Middlesex UB10 ODB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01895230843
Number on roll	237	Fax number	01895258338
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Tina Starzecki
Date of previous inspection	27 September 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Jane Ellis

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Highfield Primary School is situated in a semi-rural area of Hillingdon and caters for children aged three to eleven. There are 246 children mainly from white British backgrounds and some from other ethnic groups. A few children are at the early stages of learning English. The number of children entitled to free school meals is higher than average. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The school was without a substantive headteacher for four terms. The new headteacher has been in post for 6 weeks.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Inspectors recognise that Highfield School is much liked by the parents and children. However, due to the decline in results in recent years, the overall effectiveness of school is inadequate and it provides unsatisfactory value for money. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the standards achieved and systems for monitoring its work. Children do not make the progress they should. The newly appointed headteacher has, in a very short time, begun to provide a clear educational direction to the school. The monitoring of teaching and learning is underway and improvements are proving beneficial. Staff, governors and children are united in their determination to raise standards. This means the school has the capacity to improve. That said, improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory because not enough has been done to stem the decline in standards or improve the quality of provision in the nursery. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory, although over time it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils made headway in their learning. Parents give overwhelming support to the school. Procedures for assessing children are inconsistent and do not support their progress. The school is successful in promoting children's social and moral skills, so that they behave well and learn in a happy atmosphere. Many children gain confidence and develop high levels of self esteem with the support of all the adults. Most children are happy at school, although attendance is unsatisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

* Raise all teaching to the level of the best and raise standards in English, mathematics and science across the school.* Develop effective systems for monitoring and tracking children's progress, and set clear, challenging targets for improvement.* Give subject leaders a stronger role in reviewing and raising standards.* Make sure that governors develop a strategic overview and more critical perspective to serve school improvement.* Improve attendance

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The school identifies these aspects to be satisfactory, but this is not borne out by inspection evidence and national test results of the last 2 years, which show a sharp decline and are inadequate. Children make inadequate progress across the school. They enter the nursery with skills below those expected for their age, particularly in language and communication. By the end of reception, children have made some progress but some do not meet the goals set for them nationally at the age of five. At age seven, standards are low in reading and writing, but average in mathematics. At age eleven, the national test results have declined significantly since 2003 in English,

mathematics and science. The unreported results of 2005 show a further considerable decline for both seven and eleven year-olds. School data shows that standards in writing are poor across the school and that boys make poorer progress than girls. The percentage of children achieving higher levels of attainment has also dropped, except in science at age eleven. This indicates that children capable of reaching better standards are underachieving. Children with learning difficulties and those new to English, make adequate progress due to extra support in lessons.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Inspectors are in agreement with the school, that children's personal development is satisfactory. Children who attend regularly enjoy coming to school. They behave well due to clear expectations and good relationships at all levels. Most children have positive attitudes to their work and teachers encourage their active participation in lessons. Children are helped to gain confidence and self esteem in a supportive environment. They contribute well to the school community, through the school council where their views are expressed and taken seriously. Year 6 children are given various responsibilities around the school so they make a good contribution to the school community. Children are polite and courteous to visitors and to one another. Adults treat children with respect and care. Attendance is unsatisfactory and strategies have been introduced to improve this. Provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Social and moral issues are taught well so there is a positive learning atmosphere. Spiritual development is considered in assemblies, religious education, art and music. In the assembly to celebrate the harvest children were encouraged to reflect on the needs of those less fortunate than themselves. An achievement assembly was successful in motivating children to want to learn as they were rewarded for their efforts. Children have opportunities to learn about their own culture, but more could be done to further their understanding of other cultures. The school is promoting healthy eating and drinking, and children know about the importance of healthy lifestyles. Low standards in literacy and numeracy have hindered the development of children's economic well-being, but this now being dealt with in a determined manner.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching observed by inspectors was satisfactory and in line with school's own judgment. However, over time teaching has not been robust enough to stem the decline in standards and achievement. The new head teacher has rightly identified the need to improve teaching as a high priority. Teaching and learning are now monitored closely and significant improvements have been made in a short period of time. These improvements are motivating children to want to learn. In one lesson, the teacher used challenging questions to help children plan a play script, and encourage them to

produce a class play. Children were enthusiastic and involved, making good contributions that enhanced their skills in speaking, listening and writing. Inspection evidence and the headteacher's monitoring confirm the weaknesses that have hindered achievement throughout the school. Tasks are not always carefully matched to children's abilities, particularly those of higher ability. In some lessons, there is too much talk by teachers and insufficient time is given for finishing the task. Also opportunities for writing at length are limited. The presentation and marking of work is inconsistent across the school. Children are not given their personal targets or made aware of how to improve because assessments, undertaken each term, are inconsistent and the outcomes are not used effectively to plan future lessons. The headteacher has already developed plans to overcome these weaknesses and is already proving successful, especially in providing more interesting work for the pupils to do. Teaching assistants support children with learning difficulties appropriately so that they make progress. Children in the nursery settle quickly into school routines and the reception teacher builds on children's knowledge effectively. These young children are well motivated and enjoy the well-planned activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with school's judgement of a satisfactory curriculum. There is appropriate provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum is enriched through visits out and visitors to the school. Theatre groups are invited and Year 6 children enjoy a residential visit which develops their social skills well. There are opportunities for learning musical instruments and taking part in school productions. Children contribute to the local community, for example by singing to older residents or making cakes for a coffee morning to raise funds. They visit the church and the local library for events such as the recent Black History week. The school fulfils its commitment to including all pupils in the activities it provides, but their academic needs are not addressed fully. Children enjoy all sporting activities and participate in lunchtime and after school clubs on offer. They benefit from liaison with the local high school, which offers trampoline and basketball. Personal, social and health education is central to the ethos of the school. Children know about healthy lifestyles and what this entails.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement of satisfactory care and welfare. Children gain confidence and self esteem, as their needs are considered and respected by all staff. The school is committed to supporting all children in a secure environment. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are fully in place. Child protection procedures are clear and widely known. Children are encouraged to show respect, kindness and responsibility for others so they can keep safe. The friendship stop in the playground supports harmonious playtime for all. Targets for improvement are only set in mental arithmetic, but there are few individual targets to improve progress

and support standards. Initiatives to raise standards in mathematics and reading are programmed to start shortly. They will be checked for their effectiveness. An initiative to provide additional help for girls is already proving successful in raising their achievements. Children with learning difficulties, receive appropriate care and support. The parent and teacher association is supportive and provides additional funds to further children's learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The leadership and management of the school are inadequate overall. The school has undergone a difficult transition over the last four terms after the previous headteacher left. In the past the school has not focused sufficiently on its monitoring and evaluation of children's learning and their outcomes, and this has resulted in a significant drop in standards in the recent years. The co-ordinators have not carried out their role of monitoring standards and teaching in their subjects. The governors, although committed to do their best by the school and its pupils, have not involved themselves strategically in monitoring and evaluating work of the school. As a result they have not held the school to account fully. In the first few weeks of her appointment, the new headteacher has undertaken some rigorous evaluation to identify the school's strengths and areas for improvement. She has already begun to share her vision of a focussed direction towards raising pupils' achievements, with all concerned. The monitoring of teaching is already underway and is having a positive impact on learning. There is convincing evidence of accurate self-assessment and effective strategic planning. A well considered development plan has been drafted as a result. The views of all members of the school community are sought, carefully analysed and taken into account when finalising the improvement plan. In discussions with senior staff it is clear that they are guided well and ready to make the changes needed to improve standards and provision. Within a short space of time, the new headteacher has formed a cohesive team of staff that has the full support of the parents, who are keen to improve their own practice. The school is suitably poised and has the capacity to make improvements in the future.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Following our visit to inspect your school we would like to tell you how much we enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes. Thank you, especially those children who spent time talking with us, and telling us their views and ideas. There are lots of things that we like about your school. Some of them are: * Your school is friendly and welcoming. You behave well and get on well with each other. * You listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try hard in your lessons.

* Your new headteacher is determined to ensure that you all make good progress. * We enjoyed your harvest assembly, and were also very pleased to see so many of you receiving achievement awards and certificates. * Your class teachers, and all of the other people who help run your school, are keen to make sure that you get the very best education.

* All the adults in your school want you to get better at English, mathematics and science. They also want to make all their lessons good ones, set you targets to reach and check that you are reaching them, so that learning is even more enjoyable. The governors are also going to check how well the school is doing. You can help by all attending school regularly. Thank you for welcoming us to your school.

Yours sincerely

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector