



Highgate Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103817
LEA Dudley
Inspection number 276999
Inspection dates 22 September 2005 to 23 September 2005
Reporting inspector Tony Dobell RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highgate Road
School category	Community		Woodside
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Dudley, West Midlands DY2 0SN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01384 818245
Number on roll	319	Fax number	01384 818 246
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr S Brown
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Eileen Bissell

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Highgate is a large primary school close to the centre of Dudley, an area with social and economic deprivation. Many of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language. A small number of pupils are from asylum-seeking families. A high proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities and a significant number of pupils join and leave the school each year. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The local education authority's provision for children with speech and language difficulties is housed in the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school giving good value for money. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good although standards are below average at the end of the Reception Year because of children's low starting points. The school has improved well since its last inspection and, although the headteacher has only been in post for two terms, has a good capacity to improve further. Parents and pupils rightly hold the school in high regard.

A key feature of the school's success is that it values all pupils for what they can offer. Their personal development is good and pupils become quietly confident and have good attitudes to learning, though a very small number attend poorly. The school also involves parents and governors in its work very well and values their views.

The school knows its strengths and weaker points well. Inspectors judge achievement to be good, which is better than the school had thought, but otherwise agree with the school's self-assessment. Children make good progress between the ages of four and seven and very good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. The quality of teaching is good which is better than at the time of the last inspection. Lessons are often interesting and stimulating but in the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils had few opportunities to take initiatives and to manage their own learning.

The school checks pupils' progress well and plans future learning effectively. This is a central aspect of the good leadership and management throughout the school. The leadership of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. The headteacher acknowledges that there is now a need to make written plans more clearly focused so that improvement priorities are identified more clearly.

What the school should do to improve further

- provide pupils with more opportunities to take initiatives and to manage their own learning;
- refine strategic planning so that key priorities are more clearly identified.
- continue to improve the attendance of the few pupils causing concern.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well. They enter school with skills and knowledge well below the levels expected, especially in literacy, numeracy, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Progress is good in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2. Although standards in the national reading, writing and mathematics tests are still well below average by the end of Year 2, the school meets targets that are agreed with the local education authority. Pupils make very good progress in Years 3 to 6. By the end of Key Stage 2 their results in the English, mathematics and science tests are in line with the national averages.

The school carefully manages pupils' learning by systematically assessing their work and reviewing their progress. This helps pupils to feel valued and to build on their existing levels of understanding. It also ensures that support is well-targeted and effective. As a result, most pupils make at least good progress, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. However, poor attendance slows the progress of a small number of pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

There is good provision for pupils' personal development and for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are cheerful and generally treat each other sensitively and with respect. They enjoy lessons and behave well. The school has high expectations for pupils' effort and behaviour and these expectations are largely met. In discussion, pupils agreed that bullying was not a major issue and that, when rare instances occur, they are taken seriously and dealt with quickly. Pupils like the 'worry boxes' through which they can make any concerns known, and agreed that they felt safe and secure in the school.

Pupils' positive attitudes are fostered by the school's programme of personal, health and social education. They understand the need to eat healthy foods and to exercise regularly. They appreciate the wide range of opportunities provided by the school that enable them to develop a range of skills which they can go on to use in later life. Their enjoyment of school means that most attend regularly. However, the poor attendance of a very small number of pupils restricts their personal development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is of a particularly high standard in art and design and design, and technology. Teachers work hard to plan interesting and exciting lessons, with good use of computer-driven whiteboards. As a result, pupils concentrate well and are keen to learn and make good progress. However, in some lessons, teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to take initiatives or to organise and manage their own learning.

Pupils acknowledge that feedback from teachers helps them to improve. There are good systems for gathering information about pupils' progress. These enable teachers to set realistic but challenging targets for different groups of pupils. For example, pupils' writing is checked in detail each half term in their writing progress books, standards are identified and progress measured. Consequently, the school is aware that some pupils consistently make careless errors which are an obstacle to raising standards.

The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well met. In this, teaching assistants play an important role. Additional and effective support is also

provided for pupils with English as an additional language and for those pupils joining the school during a school term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum with particular richness in art and design and design and technology, as well as providing pupils with a good grounding in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. This is reinforced by good enrichment through visits and visitors. For example, a visitor demonstrated how to play a drum kit during an assembly. There is also a wide range of after-school activities, managed by the school's effective learning mentor, which enables all pupils to participate in different activities if they wish. Cooperation with the local secondary school provides further opportunities, not least for those who have particular gifts or talents. For example, a boy with a particular flair for soccer and basketball has been put into contact with a professional coach. Parents are increasingly involved in supporting these activities and pupils support each other in school, for example, as reading partners.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for and supports pupils well. The school develops their self-confidence successfully which has a significant impact on their learning and in them becoming useful young citizens. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and up-to-date, and are well known to staff. All adults know pupils well so that they can react quickly to any early signs of disaffection or distress. Because of this, pupils feel secure and valued and so develop the confidence to play their part in the life of the school. Staff manage behaviour well and pupils receive effective guidance to help them to improve their work. The school is developing strategies to try to improve the attendance of the few pupils causing concern. The quality of care and support is recognised by pupils and was strongly confirmed by parents in a high return of questionnaires.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, fully supported by the acting deputy headteacher, teachers and governors, is providing strong leadership. All adults have a passionate commitment to enabling all pupils to reach their potential and to benefit from the school's provisions. To this end, the school has improved attendance levels and is working hard to improve them further.

The managers of key subjects, and areas in the school such as the Foundation Stage and the provision for learning difficulties and disabilities, have a good awareness of standards and are keen to raise standards further. The management of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding and is enabling these

pupils to make very good progress. Throughout the school, resources are used well to help the school in its drive to improve. There are close links with parents and with outside agencies, such as the school health visitor, to support pupils' learning effectively. Governors are involved in major decisions. They rightly see their role as one of critical friend to the school and fulfil their responsibilities well.

The headteacher is determined to raise standards further, even though all groups of pupils already make above average progress. She has clear ideas for the school's further development, some of which go beyond what is formally recorded. She accepts that priorities need to be more clearly identified in planning documents

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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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	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

Highgate Primary School Highgate Road Woodside Dudley West Midlands DY2 0SN

24 September 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming us into your school and talking to us about your work and your life in school. We think that your school does a lot of things well:

you make good progress because you are well taught

your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons and to provide enjoyable activities at lunchtimes and after school

your art and design and design and technology work is really impressive

you feel safe and happy in the school because adults care for you, value your ideas and give you good advice on how to improve your work

you have a good awareness of the need for exercise and eating healthy food

your headteacher is super and she has good ideas for the school's future

All of these things mean that you develop into confident young people, happy to say what you think in class and in assemblies. We think that three things would improve the school further:

a few of you need to stop being away so often

your teachers should give you more chances to think for yourselves

your headteacher needs to turn her good ideas into plans so everybody knows how to make the school better.

We enjoyed our two days in the school and wish you well for the future. Best wishes

Mr A J Dobell (Lead inspector)