



# High Bank First School and Early Years Unit

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 107684  
**LEA** Kirklees  
**Inspection number** 277806  
**Inspection dates** 5 June 2006 to 6 June 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Linda Murphy CfBT Lead Inspector

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Eighth Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Community		Liversedge
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9		West Yorkshire WF15 8LD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 335237
<b>Number on roll</b>	84	<b>Fax number</b>	01274 335239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Miss C Holt
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kath Benetis

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This small school serves an area characterised by high levels of economic disadvantage. The pupils are mostly White British. A small proportion is from minority ethnic groups and these pupils are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and pupils who join and leave the school during the year, is high.

Since the last inspection there have been significant changes to the school: numbers on roll have fallen, accommodation has improved and staffing including headship has changed quite regularly. The present headteacher has been in post since 2003. The school was designated an extended school and Children's Centre in 2004.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

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 be reasonably expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement at Key Stage 2 in English and mathematics. As a result the school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

Between the last inspection and this one the school's results in the national tests at Year 2 have been low and with a downward trend. Pupils' achievement has been inadequate. Under good guidance from the new headteacher, the recently formed leadership team is tackling these poor results and the legacy of underperformance. It has identified the causes of the underachievement and has taken action to improve standards in English in particular. These changes are beginning to have positive results. For example, in 2006, standards have improved well at Year 2 and are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The improvement has not yet worked through to Years 3 and 4 where standards remain low in English and mathematics and pupils' achievement inadequate. Pupils in these year groups have suffered from many changes of teachers and a lack of continuity in learning. Over time the quality of teaching and learning has been inadequate overall. It has been brought up to a satisfactory level: a significant amount is good but there remain some pockets where the pace is slow, the challenge insufficient and pupils do not learn quickly enough.

In the Nursery and Reception years the children make good progress. They receive a practical and well thought out curriculum and are taught well. Nevertheless because of their low starting points they do not quite meet the standards set nationally for their age.

Since the last inspection, the school has lacked stability in staffing. For example, the present headteacher is the fourth to be appointed since 2000: it was only in 2005 that a senior leadership team was fully established. There has been much to do because many areas of the school's work had declined. Clear priorities for development, the positive steps taken, together with improved standards from the Nursery to Year 2 and the good leadership by the headteacher, demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve. The headteacher has concentrated on four main areas in which to raise standards. These include establishing successfully a leadership team to provide longer-term stability. New arrangements such as the assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning of all groups of pupils. Much work with parents and outside agencies has attracted extra funding and improved facilities to include extended school activities, a Children's Centre and better provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Priority has also been given to help pupils lead safe, healthy and enjoyable lives at school and to be ready to learn and 'reach for the stars' as the school song urges them to do.

The outcome so far is that standards are improved by Year 2 and relationships are good. Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their learning. Not all pupils attend well: attendance is below average and has declined since the last inspection.

Governance is satisfactory. For the first time in three years the governing body has its full complement. The arrangements for checking the impact of the many recent changes are a challenge for the school to meet.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement and standards in English and mathematics in Year 3 and Year 4.
- Increase the quantity and consistency of good teaching.
- Raise the level of attendance.
- Extend the role of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education the school provides.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Achievement and standards are inadequate overall because the progress of pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 has been patchy over recent years and not good enough. This results in standards that are exceptionally below those expected for pupils of their age in English and mathematics.

The children enter the Nursery with skills which are much less well developed than those of most three-year-olds. Priority is given to tackling delays in speech, language and personal development. Pupils have a smooth transition from Nursery through to Year 2 and this results in good progress and broadly average standards at the end of Year 2. Well chosen strategies that are implemented effectively give pupils growing skills and confidence in speaking and listening and helps their readiness to learn. This also helps the pupils learning English as an additional language. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as other pupils. They make good progress when they have extra tuition in language groups.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Strengths are in the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A weakness is in the well below average attendance.

A deterioration in pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning between inspections has clearly been addressed. Most pupils behave well and take great delight in their learning. School rules are upheld by staff and seen as fair by the children. The school stands no nonsense hence the exclusion of two pupils who strayed too far from the code of conduct. The very well attended breakfast club provides children with a healthy breakfast, personal guidance, companionship and a wealth of activities to promote their skills at reading, speaking, and socialising with others. It prepares pupils to work

hard during the school day. In the school's restaurant pupils eat healthily, use cutlery correctly and are polite and courteous. Older pupils are very kind and helpful to the younger ones. Pupils appreciate the importance of leading safe and healthy lives. For example, pupils go running at lunchtime to build up distance over time and all pupils have the opportunity to cycle and keep fit at play times. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and local community but because their basic skills in literacy and numeracy are low at Year 4 they are not well equipped for later life.

The school's arrangements for promoting good attendance are ineffective. Parents are contacted straight away if their children are absent from school but attendance has declined.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is typically satisfactory and improving. Pupils say that what helps them to learn are interesting lessons, timely help from adults and clear explanations. What adversely affects their learning is 'a lot of new teachers'. This comment reflects the frequent staff changes over time. In the Foundation Stage teaching is of good quality and pupils learn at a fast rate. Emphasis is rightly placed on personal development, speaking and listening.

Across the school relationships are good: pupils feel secure and ready to learn. Classrooms are light, airy and well set out to help pupils learn. Assessment for pupils' learning provides day-to-day information to help pupils learn at the right level. The good quality teaching and learning from senior staff and well-guided teachers in the early stage of their careers sets good examples for others. When teaching is not at its best the pace of lessons is slow and lacks challenge to make pupils think really hard. At these times the pupils are passive and learn little.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The satisfactory curriculum caters appropriately for the mixed age classes. Emphasis is placed on literacy, speaking and mathematics. Art and design is used well as a vehicle to promote spirituality and reflection. Personal, social and health education has its rightful place and is interwoven through many other subjects and out of school activities. Links with agencies out of school work well in terms of promoting pupils' achievement but support to help improve attendance has yet to fully bear fruition. A good number and range of clubs and activities after school enhance the basic curriculum. The clubs are well attended and much enjoyed by pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is lively and planned well to encourage independence. The focus on speaking and letter-sounds gets pupils off to a good start in readiness for their work in Year 1.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The pastoral care the school gives its pupils is good, held in high regard by parents and promotes pupils' social development well. Pupils know who to turn to if they need help. Any incidents of bullying - few and far between - are dealt with quickly. Arrangements for child protection are in place and followed by staff. Assessments of risk are mostly up to date but the school has yet to ensure that changes to the external accommodation meet the required standard. The guidance given to pupils to help them learn has improved recently and has already helped pupils from Nursery to Year 2 to achieve well. Targets in literacy and numeracy help pupils understand what it is they need to do next to improve. Recently established tracking of pupils' progress provides information to identify groups who may need extra help and is used to look carefully at the progress of those who join the school during the year. Individual targets for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are precise and used well in work with small groups. When plans are made for the full class, insufficient account is taken of these targets so pupils do not always know exactly what it is they need to do next to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher gives a strong lead to the school and is focused on raising standards. The leadership team, though relatively inexperienced, gives sound support. The leaders have analysed accurately the school's strengths and weaknesses and formed a clear view of the development required. Their hard work is already having a positive impact on the quality of education and senior staff are ready to take on more delegation. Governors fulfil their roles and provide support and some challenge, which the school welcomes. They understand the school's need to improve. Their monitoring is satisfactory but is at an early stage of development. The school's improvement plan identifies the correct priorities but monitoring and evaluation are imprecise.

A large inherited underspend on the budget is sensibly earmarked for staffing and improvements to the accommodation and resources especially information and communication technology. Good links with outside agencies are established and this has led to some positive outcomes in terms of the pupils' progress: there is more to do to improve attendance. Parents are kept informed of the school's work and they are pleased about the way that the school listens to their views and acts on them appropriately. Since the appointment of the headteacher and the establishment of the leadership group the school has faced significant challenge yet brought about success in raising standards in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The challenge now is to improve achievement in Key Stage 2. The school has shown that it has a good capacity to do this under its new leadership.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	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	3	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	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	4	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	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	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	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	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Thank you for talking to me about your school and showing me your work when I inspected your school.

The inspection showed that:

- children in the Nursery through to Year 2 learn fast
- this is a happy school where you all get on well together. You behave well and those of you who come to school every day enjoy your work, play and lunch in the restaurant
- the school works well with other people to provide lots of clubs, including a good breakfast club for you to enjoy, and these help to keep you safe and healthy
- the headteacher is good at her work and other teachers help her.

As a matter of urgency the school needs to make sure that:

- children in Year 3 and 4 learn at a good rate and reach the standards of which they are capable in English and mathematics
- all the teaching is the best it can be so that all pupils learn quickly
- you all attend school as many days as possible
- the governors get better at checking all aspects of the school's work.

You and your families can help by making sure you come to school every day.