



Highfield Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108351
LEA Gateshead
Inspection number 277954
Inspection dates 16 May 2006 to 17 May 2006
Reporting inspector Mr David Earley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highfield Road
School category	Community		Rowlands Gill
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE39 2LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01207 542086
Number on roll	116	Fax number	01207 542086
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Cllr Mike McNestry
Date of previous inspection	1 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Steven Thompson

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 16 May 2006 - 17 May 2006	Inspection number 277954
-----------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves an area of Gateshead where levels of social deprivation are high and a large number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry is lower than expected for this age and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The pupils are of white British origin. In a year's time, the school is to share a new building with a local primary 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 which gives good value for money and commands the support of parents. Overall, most pupils make good progress and achieve well as they move through the school, so that by the end of Year 6 standards are average. Standards have risen significantly during the last two academic years as a result of improvements initiated by the headteacher. Personal development is good so that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They know how to lead healthy lifestyles and have a good understanding of the world of work. Pupils enjoy school and most attend well, although the poor attendance of a minority leads to below average attendance overall. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are satisfactory, as is children's progress. The curriculum is good, with a wide range of enrichment activities. The school's good links with outside agencies and other schools support teachers and pupils. Care and guidance are good so that pupils feel safe and valued. The school makes effective use of assessment to check on learning and to help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. Leadership and management are good overall. Staff share a very clear vision for improvement that is based on the school's accurate self-evaluation. However, subject leaders have too few opportunities to observe lessons in order to improve teaching and learning in their subjects. The very strong leadership provided by the headteacher, together with the commitment of staff and governors, gives the school good capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build further upon the good work that has already raised standards.
- Increase the opportunities for subject leaders to check teaching and learning in order to raise standards.
- Improve attendance by continuing to work with the small numbers of parents who do not send their children to school regularly.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Given their capabilities and earlier achievements, pupils do well to move from below average attainment on entry to achieve average standards at the end of Year 6. In the 2005 tests, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were below average. This was an improvement on the previous four years, when they were significantly below average. In the tests at the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science were broadly average. The school exceeded its statutory targets in English and science, and in mathematics at the higher Level 5. This represents a marked improvement on the significantly below average standards of the previous three years. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and pupils are meeting more challenging targets. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now average. The pace of improvement has increased during the last two academic years because the

headteacher has established successful strategies to raise standards. Improvements in teaching, and in the use of assessment throughout the school, are helping to raise standards at both key stages. This enables most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make good progress. However, progress in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory because of disruptions in the teaching. This has been remedied, but there has not been enough time to raise the overall rate of progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils participate in lessons enthusiastically and behave well. They are polite and courteous and generally get on well with each other and adults. They willingly accept responsibility and contribute to the school and wider community. The school is particularly successful in encouraging pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles by working with professionals such as health workers, nutritionists and, on one occasion, a chef. In spite of the efforts of the school and the local authority, attendance is below average. It has improved because the school has used a range of strategies to encourage attendance and punctuality, but a very small group of parents still do not ensure that their children attend regularly. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they are confident to approach adults with any problems they might have. They say that bullying is rare and that any instances are dealt with promptly by the school. Pupils have a good awareness of their own cultural traditions but some are less aware of the cultural diversity of British society. Good links with the world of business extend pupils' economic awareness and help to increase their understanding of the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The very good relationships, effective class-management skills and high expectations of teachers create a good ethos for learning and help pupils to make good progress. Because of some disruptions in staffing, the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The development of a range of strategies has helped to improve teaching and learning throughout the school. Particularly successful are the use of teaching assistants to support the acquisition of basic skills and the use of ICT to extend learning. Improvements in the marking of work give pupils a clearer understanding of what they need to do in order to improve. Because pupils are involved in assessing their work, they have more control of their learning. Teachers use assessment and tracking systems effectively to plan work which challenges pupils according to their abilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good overall. It is broad and balanced, and well focused on meeting individual needs and developing basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. A comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education gives pupils a good grounding in issues of personal safety, care and healthy living. Out-of-school clubs are very popular, with the majority of pupils taking advantage of the range of activities offered. The curriculum is enriched by visitors to the school and by a wide range of visits out of school, including residential experiences. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because the school makes good use of assessments, teaching assistants, support staff and outside agencies. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. It is improving as planning becomes more sharply focused on individual needs. Good links with the neighbourhood nursery, the children's centre and the local secondary school ensure cohesion in provision and a smooth transfer to the next stage in education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Each pupil is valued within a very caring ethos. The school is a bright, cheerful and welcoming place. Pupils are usually confident and enjoy school because staff know them well and relationships are very good. Child protection and health and safety arrangements are thoroughly implemented. A careful check is kept on personal development, and support for the most vulnerable pupils is good. The school works well with external agencies, especially those concerned with pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. As a result of this good additional support and the support provided by the school, most pupils with difficulties in behaviour or learning make good progress in learning the basic skills. The school uses assessment and tracking effectively to check each pupil's academic progress and provide additional support and guidance where necessary.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall. The dynamic and inspirational leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, has led to developments which are markedly improving standards for all pupils. The headteacher has played a significant role in creating both a shared ethos and a staff team who are committed to high expectations and continuing improvement. Professional development is closely linked to raising achievement for particular groups of pupils. Changes in staff responsibilities have been carefully managed, although the role of subject leaders is not well developed. They do not have enough opportunities to check teaching and learning in order to make improvements. The school's self-evaluation provides an accurate assessment of its current effectiveness and firmly informs the school improvement plan. Careful preparations for the move to a new shared building have

been managed well and have not been allowed to weaken the focus on raising standards. The governors support the school well and are led by a very experienced chair. Most parents feel positive about the school and know that it values and acts on their views and those of the pupils. The budget is well managed so that it underpins the drive to raise standards. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection, and the rate of improvement continues to accelerate. It has good capacity to improve further.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------	--------------

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	3	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	2	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

Alexandra House

33 Kingsway

London

WC2B 6SE

T 0207 421 6800

F 0207 421 6707

Ofsted helpline

08456 404045

Highfield Community Primary School

Highfield Road

Rowlands Gill

Tyne and Wear

NE39 2LX

18 May 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making me welcome in your school. I enjoyed talking to you because you were very polite and courteous. You told me that you enjoy coming to school and that you feel safe and well cared for. I really liked the way you try to eat healthily and was very impressed that you had worked with a chef. You also get plenty of exercise so that you keep fit and enjoy sports and games.

I think that Mr Thompson is a very good headteacher who works very hard, together with all the teachers, to help you to do your best and to make your learning interesting. I have asked Mr Thompson to find some time for teachers who look after subjects to check how well you are learning so that they can help you to do better. I think that you behave well and children do lots of jobs to help others in school. I liked the way the school council helped to organise the opening of the children's centre and arranged for packed lunches to be kept on a trolley. Most of you attend regularly and I have asked the school to remind the parents of those whose attendance is not good to help them to improve.

I was pleased to see that, by the time they leave Year 6, most children are doing as well as expected in their English, mathematics and science. I have asked Mr Thompson and all the teachers to continue to help you in the way that they do so that you learn even better. It was good to see that you talk about success criteria when you are checking your work because this helps you to improve your learning. You have lots of interesting after-school clubs, and you go on visits and have people like poets and theatre groups in to work with you. This helps to make your work interesting.

Thank you again for making me most welcome. I hope that you enjoy your new school.

Best wishes

David Earley

(Your school inspector)