



Highfield Hall Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112667
LEA DERBYSHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278986
Inspection dates 27 February 2006 to 28 February 2006
Reporting inspector Mr. Keith Edwards LI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Highfield Lane |
| School category | Community | | S41 8AZ |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01246 273534 |
| Number on roll | 387 | Fax number | 01246 554120 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr. Stuart Yeowart |
| Date of previous inspection | 26 June 2000 | Headteacher | Mr. Gary Martin |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves the suburb of Newbold on the outskirts of Chesterfield. Most of the children live locally. Almost all of the pupils are white and all come from homes where English is the first language. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average as is the range of socio-economic circumstances. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, is below that of most schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education. The headteacher has steered the school through a difficult period in the school's history and has established an ethos where every child is valued. The school has the respect of the community that it serves. The leadership teams have resolved the key issues regarding attainment from the last inspection, as standards have risen. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 1 where standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly. Standards are improving in Key Stage 2, particularly in science, although issues remain about the use of assessment data when planning lessons in English and mathematics. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage and their progress are satisfactory. The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and the personal development of the children is a strength. As a result pupils behave very well and relationships are strong. The school works well in partnership with the local community. However, inspectors found that the school holds too generous a view of itself as there is a lack of consistency in teaching and learning. The school lacks rigour in the way that it monitors its effectiveness. The governors provide good support for the work of the school but need to develop their role as critical friends. The school recognises where it needs to make further improvements, particularly in strategies for raising achievement, and has a clear plan of action. Highfield Hall provides satisfactory value for money and is continuing to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use made of assessment data to guide the planning of lessons so that activities are more closely matched to the differing needs of the pupils.
- Improve the rigour and the quality of monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency of practice and raise standards to the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in science are above average because lessons provide good opportunities for practical investigations. Standards in the national tests have risen at the end of each key stage since the last inspection. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 1 where the pupils build successfully on the secure grounding they receive in the basic skills in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' performance in national tests has lacked consistency in recent years. The school does not always achieve its targets in English and mathematics. The school now sets the pupils by ability in mathematics in Year 6 and has focussed on speaking and listening and writing to raise achievement in English. However, the success of these initiatives has been limited because the school does not make good use of its assessment data when

planning work for different groups of pupils and the work set is often either too easy or lacking in challenge. However, the pupils' achievements, including those with pupils with learning difficulties, are satisfactory overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development is good. They have good self-esteem, are confident and enjoy school. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They think their teachers make lessons fun, and appreciate the interesting opportunities they have to be involved in a wide range of enrichment activities. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as those of house captain, monitors and school councillors. Through these roles they contribute well to the school's development and its' smooth running each day. Pupils enjoy each other's company and work and play together constructively. Pupils are very positive about the house system which enables them to develop good team skills. They have a good understanding of healthy eating and the importance of exercise in keeping fit. They know how to keep themselves safe and care for each other well. They are aware of the needs of others and work to support the local and wider community through for example, the provision of musical entertainment or fundraising. Pupils develop literacy and numeracy skills that prepare them well for the next stage in their education and the future world of work. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and clearly reflected in the positive relationships evident throughout the school. However, better use could be made of assemblies to enhance the pupils' spiritual awareness.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the Nursery, activities are well matched to children's interests and abilities and they learn well. The quality of learning in the Reception class is satisfactory and this enables most of the children to achieve the goals for their age group. Outstanding practice is evident in Year 2. In the best lessons throughout the school, teachers use a range of teaching methods and resources to enable pupils of different abilities and those who learn in different ways to learn equally well. The pace of these lessons is brisk and teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Teachers have detailed information about what pupils have learned and use it to set targets for further improvement. However, not all teachers use the information they have effectively to plan activities to meet the needs of pupils of different ability, or to help pupils understand what they need to do next to improve. The good relationships evident throughout the school ensure pupils are keen to learn, enjoy their lessons and work hard. Pupils with special educational needs

achieve their individual targets because they are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. The provision for both ICT and religious education has improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Occasionally lessons are too long and pupils' learning slows. The pupils' progress is tracked accurately but the information gained is not used effectively to match the learning more closely to the needs of all learners to further raise achievement. Whole school activities such as Healthy Eating Week, raise pupils' awareness of staying healthy. Pupils report they feel safe and well cared for. There is a good range of exciting enrichment opportunities, for example the visit to Eden Camp and the Starchaser Space programme coming to the school. In addition, visitors to the school and activities such as the Roman Day and Greek Day, broaden the pupils' experience and deepen their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support for pupils is good. Most pupils find the teachers' marking and feedback helpful but are less sure of their individual targets. Parents are kept well informed through consultation evenings and two written reports, which are informative and indicate targets for improvement. Parents appreciate the work of the school and the care given to their children. Provision for vulnerable children is good. Pupils feel safe and cared for because health and safety procedures are clear and understood by staff. Safety of pupils is given high priority. Pupils are confident that in the rare event of any bullying occurring it will be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils' views are listened to and the school council feels its views matter and will be acted upon. Child protection procedures are clear and understood by staff. There are good systems in place to enable pupils to transfer easily between classes each year and to their secondary school at the end of Year 6.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher, ably supported by his deputy, leads a team that has raised standards and resolved the issues from the last inspection. The headteacher is ambitious for the school and has overcome challenging problems to maintain the momentum of school improvement. The school has gained the Investors in People award and has the respect of the parents and the community. Pupils feel safe and secure and feel their voice is heard. Although the headteacher knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school, the processes of self review lack rigour. Consequently, the school's view of itself is too generous and there are inconsistencies in practice and procedures. This is particularly evident in the use made of assessment information when lessons are planned. Leadership teams have

been formed to accelerate the rate of change, but the full impact of this initiative is yet to be felt. Governors are committed to the school and support it satisfactorily. Their awareness of their responsibility to hold it to account has grown and they are much more involved than at the time of the last inspection. They recognise the need to be sharper in their analysis of school performance and more challenging in their meetings to ensure that school progress does not falter.

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Inspection judgements

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| <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? | 3 | 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 | 3 | 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? | 3 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 | 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? | 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? | 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? | 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? | 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 | 3 | 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 |

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|---|-----|
| 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

The team of inspectors really enjoyed their visit to your school earlier in the month. It is not often that we find a school in such a grand old building. We can really understand why you enjoy your school so much. Mr Martin and the staff really work hard to make sure that there are many exciting things for you to do to make school interesting. All of the staff make a very good job of looking after you and we can tell that you are doing your best to learn in class. We were thrilled that you made us so welcome and that you were working so hard. In fact, there are many things that make your school special. Here are some of them: - You clearly try to do your best to learn in lessons. Well done! - Everybody understands the school rules and you behave extremely well. - Everybody tries to be friendly, thoughtful and helpful. - Mr Martin is very keen to make sure that you all enjoy school and do well. - The school provides a super range of activities and lessons to keep you interested. But, of course, there are still things that can be done to make your school even better: - We are asking your teachers to plan lessons a little more carefully, especially in literacy and numeracy, to make sure that what you are learning is neither too hard nor too easy. - We are asking your headteacher and his staff and the governors to keep a more careful eye on what is going on in school to make sure that the standard of teaching keeps on improving and that everybody is working to the best possible standard. Yours sincerely