



# Highfurlong School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 119868  
**LEA** Blackpool  
**Inspection number** 280677  
**Inspection dates** 24 January 2006 to 25 January 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr Andrew Margerison

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Special	<b>School address</b>	Blackpool Old Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Blackpool
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 19		Lancashire, FY3 7LR
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01253 392188
<b>Number on roll</b>	53	<b>Fax number</b>	01253 305600
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr Philip Higham
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 July 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Eddy Jackson

<b>Age group</b> 3 to 19	<b>Inspection dates</b> 24 January 2006 - 25 January 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 280677
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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

## **Description of the school**

Highfurlong School is situated on the outskirts of Blackpool. Most pupils come from Blackpool, but a significant proportion travel from neighbouring local authorities. The school caters for pupils aged 3 to 19 with physical and medical disabilities, but an increasing number have additional communication or complex learning difficulties. All of the pupils are of white British origin.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 1**

This is an outstanding school that provides very good value for money. Inspection evidence fully endorses the school's view of its own performance. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, so pupils develop exceptionally good attitudes to learning and begin to develop their basic skills well. As pupils move through the school they make consistently good progress, both personally and academically, and by the time they leave, their achievement compared to their starting points and difficulties is outstanding. Teaching is good and often excellent, and the quality of care and support is excellent.

Outstanding leadership and management at all levels have enabled the school to tackle the issues from the last inspection very successfully. In addition, the school has made great strides in responding effectively to the changing learning needs of its pupils. This is particularly the case in both the development of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool for teaching, learning and communication, and also in the work related curriculum and the excellent network of partnerships that support it. As a result, all pupils, despite their difficulties, confidently express their ideas and opinions and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, the work related provision could be extended into Key Stage 3 to begin to prepare students earlier for life after school. Parents have a very positive view of the school, but opportunities to involve them further in their children's education on a day to day basis are not always fully exploited. This particularly affects the pace of some pupils' learning in reading. The school knows itself extremely well and is very well placed to improve further.

## **Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form**

### **Grade: 1**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's view that its provision for pupils aged 16 to 19 is outstanding. The strongest features are the strategies the school has developed for preparing pupils for life after school. A thoroughly planned individual programme of work placements and careers advice gives all pupils the experiences they want and need. This ensures that they make the right choices for their future. This is very well reinforced by the taught curriculum, which includes an externally accredited course in entrepreneurship. This teaches pupils the fundamental principles of business and the value of money, and gives them experience of working together to run a business enterprise.

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

- Extend the excellent work related curriculum into Key Stage 3.
- Improve pupils' progress in reading by devising ways of involving parents more on a day to day basis in supporting the work of the school at home.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

From a very low start, pupils' achievement is outstanding. All pupils, irrespective of their difficulties or abilities, make consistently good progress throughout. In the Foundation Stage, pupils learn school routines and make good progress in developing basic skills. They achieve particularly well in their personal and social development, communication and mathematical skills. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue to make good progress in the basic skills of communication, mathematics and ICT. As a result, they learn to express their ideas and opinions confidently, using a broad range of ways of communicating, both orally and electronically. Progress in reading is satisfactory. Pupils in Years 7 to 13 also make good progress and learn to use their basic skills very well in practical situations. As a result, in 2005, all pupils in Year 11 gained externally accredited awards in several subjects including English, science and ICT. Almost half the pupils attained a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in mathematics. In the sixth form, pupils build on their skills well. In 2005, all pupils attained an award scheme development and accreditation network (ASDAN) qualification, and most achieved additional qualifications. The school has extended the range of courses available this year and all pupils are well on the way to achieving certificates in entrepreneurship and performing arts.

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

### **Grade: 1**

- Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils' outstanding attitudes to learning are reflected in their excellent behaviour and infectious enthusiasm for anything the school provides for them. In addition, despite the fact that many pupils have medical conditions that cause them to miss significant time at school, attendance is above average. Parents fully agree that their children enjoy school. Together, these factors make an important contribution to the very positive atmosphere in school and the good pace of students' learning. Pupils understand the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop a very clear understanding of how to stay safe in practical situations. The school puts considerable emphasis on teaching pupils, many of whom are potentially vulnerable, on how to make the most of social and personal relationships without putting themselves at risk. The careers and work related curriculum, and their good communication and ICT skills, prepare pupils very well for their future economic well-being. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school's community in several ways, such as the school council, but they also take an active part in local and national events and initiatives. For example, the oldest pupils recently contributed to the national consultation on improving the life chances of disabled people. The depth of feeling and perceptive comments in these letters testify to the very effective way the school nurtures pupils' spiritual and reflective development, so that they become mature and sensitive to their own and others' needs.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. A high proportion is outstanding and this drives the consistently good progress that all pupils make. Staff make every effort to ensure that pupils' disabilities are not a barrier to their learning. In lessons, teachers and support staff work together well to ensure that all pupils are included and have the opportunity to contribute their ideas. They achieve this by using assessment information to plan activities that challenge pupils of all abilities, and by the outstanding use of ICT as a teaching and communication tool. As a result, lessons are brisk and pupils are fully engaged in activities. The emphasis in lessons also gradually changes as pupils move through the school, from teaching basic skills lower down the school to giving pupils more opportunities to use these skills as they gain confidence. This flexible and individualised approach to learning is at the heart of pupils' excellent achievement. Teachers expect older pupils to do some work out of lessons and at home, but they miss chances to involve parents in supporting the work of the school with their children at home. This particularly slows the progress of pupils in Years 1 to 6 in reading, which is not as good as communication, mathematics and ICT. However, once pupils acquire the basic skills and use them more in practical situations, their progress accelerates.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It is highly relevant to each pupil's academic, personal, social and health education needs. As pupils move through the school, the curriculum reflects their growing maturity and skills so they become competent and confident learners. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has improved very well, particularly for the sixth form. The work related curriculum for pupils aged 16 to 19 is a notable strength and has been recognised as outstanding by a number of external bodies. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for moving on to the next phase of their education. However, this excellent provision could be extended into Key Stage 3 to start preparing pupils earlier for the next phase of their education or work. An exceptional range of out of school activities, lunchtime clubs and visits extends and enriches pupils' learning, and contributes strongly to their outstanding achievement and personal skills.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

The standard of support, care and guidance for pupils is outstanding. Procedures to ensure the health and safety of pupils are extremely thorough. The school makes every effort to evaluate fully all situations in and out of school so as to assess and minimise the potential risks to pupils. Child protection procedures are equally thorough, and

all adults, including governors, are trained in the latest guidance. Pupils are both very well supported in lessons by support staff and fully involved in reviewing their individual education plans. The school has established very strong links with other schools, local business and other agencies to give pupils an exceptional network of support and guidance. However, the most significant strength is the innovative use the school makes of ICT to enable pupils to communicate their ideas and wishes. As a result, all pupils are able to play their part as members of the school community and to make consistently good progress. This has been recognised nationally as an exemplar of good practice.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management at all levels are outstanding. The headteacher and the senior managers are a very strong team. They have successfully created a very positive and inclusive school ethos, based on close teamwork and mutual respect between staff, governors, pupils and parents. The excellent leadership of the headteacher was recognised at the last inspection. Since then the role of senior managers and subject leaders has been clarified and extended very well. As a result, all staff and governors make a very important contribution to the day to day management of the school, and play an important role in driving forward school improvements. The school's self-evaluation procedures include canvassing the views of all stakeholders and the accuracy of that evaluation is confirmed by inspection evidence. This inclusive and exacting approach to school development means that the school is very well placed to improve further.

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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>	1	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Yes
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The behaviour of learners	1	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	1	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	1

<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>	1	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Yes

<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	Yes
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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24 January 2006

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for welcoming me to your school this week. I enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the things you do. You were really friendly and I would have liked to have been able to stay longer. I am pleased to tell you that, like you and your parents, I think that your school is doing an excellent job. The things I particularly liked were:

your attitudes to learning are outstanding and you are really keen and enthusiastic to take part in lessons and other activities

teachers make sure you do well in all your learning, especially in communication, mathematics and ICT

you are very well prepared for moving on to college or work when you leave school

your teachers and governors know exactly what they want to do to make your school better

you are looked after and cared for exceptionally well.

I have asked your headteacher and the governors to make your school even better by:

finding ways of involving your parents more in working with you at home to support what you are learning in school

introducing the careers and work related activities a little earlier.

Thanks again for helping me so much with the inspection and letting me join in with your lessons.

Andy Margerison

Lead inspector