



Highbury Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126265
LEA Wiltshire
Inspection number 282084
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector David Cox AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highbury Avenue
School category	Community		Salisbury
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Wiltshire SP2 7EY
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01722 322832
Number on roll	246	Fax number	01722 339283
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jane Axtell
Date of previous inspection	15 September 2003	Headteacher	Mrs Anne Munns

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Highbury Primary School is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most of the pupils are from a White British background, although there are a small number from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. When children start school many have the skills and knowledge typical of four-year-olds. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The school has a Specialist Learning Centre (SLC) for pupils with 'complex' learning needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that is improving rapidly. The inspectors agree with the school's view that it provides a satisfactory education. Standards are average and by Year 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily because teaching is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Reception class with many achieving what they are expected to. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 as a result of good teaching. By Year 6, a small minority of boys have weaknesses in their writing. This is because teachers do not always use the assessment data gathered on these boys to set tasks that they enjoy and are pitched at the right level. Some pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not confident with mental arithmetic. Pupils with learning difficulties, those with complex needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.

Pupils are well cared for and safe. The school goes to good lengths to ensure that all pupils are treated equally. The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy their time in school. Pupils develop satisfactory personal skills. Leadership and management are good and the school has made very good progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous report when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses. The headteacher has played a major role in achieving this. Standards continue to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money and is well placed to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure all teachers in Years 3 to 6 make more effective use of the assessment data gathered to set more challenging and enjoyable writing tasks for a small minority of boys in order to raise standards
- Remedy the weaknesses in mathematics by providing pupils with more opportunities to practise mental arithmetic.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily from their time on entry into the school. There has been a significant improvement in overall standards since the last inspection because the school sets challenging targets.

When pupils start school most have the skills and knowledge typical of four-year-olds. During their time in the Reception class pupils make satisfactory progress with many achieving what they are expected to by Year 1. Results in the national tests in 2005 for pupils in Year 2 were broadly average overall and pupils made satisfactory progress. The significant rise seen in standards is continuing in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are currently making good progress and are on target to attain above average standards because teaching is good.

By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards in English and science are average. Pupils read well and with expression. Whilst many of the girls make good progress with their writing there is a small minority of boys whose writing skills are a relative weakness.

This is because teachers do not always make effective use of the assessment data gathered on these boys to provide tasks that motivate and stretch them. Also, when boys in the current Year 6 were lower down the school, they were not always provided with tasks that they found enjoyable or valued. It is only now, through the good teaching in Year 6 that they are catching up. Pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics and their standards are just below average. A small minority of pupils is not confident in problem solving and there are weaknesses in mental arithmetic. This is because teachers do not always provide them with enough opportunities to practise such skills.

Pupils with learning difficulties including those with complex learning needs are well taught and also supported by teaching assistants so they make good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language are also provided with good support and achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Pupils like school and most show an interest in lessons and other activities. Attendance is near the national average. Pupils show good capacity to take responsibility around school, for example, helping younger pupils through the class 'buddying' scheme. The school council provides a good forum for pupils to voice their opinions and contribute to improvements in school such as changing the school uniform. With the development of target setting, pupils are beginning to take a greater degree of control over their own progress and are beginning to understand how to improve their work.

Pupils show a good level of respect for the lives and cultures of others and incidents of bullying and racism are very rare. No pupil has recently been excluded from the school. Pupils are very aware of how to remain healthy and safe, for example through competing in the 'Salisbury Schools Mini Marathon'. Pupils' basic skills prepare them satisfactorily for life ahead, and for their future economic well-being. Visits from visitors with a range of occupations such as doctors and electricians help pupils to understand how businesses operate.

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is satisfactory. Most pupils concentrate well. In some lessons, however, there is a degree of restlessness amongst some, particularly boys, which, although well managed by the teachers, takes time and energy that could be more usefully directed elsewhere.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. As a result, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Teaching is good in Years 1, 2 and 6 resulting in pupils making good progress.

Where teaching is most effective, teachers provide interesting tasks that motivate pupils. Lessons are well structured and focus on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils are well managed and this good management is sometimes needed to successfully control over-enthusiasm and some restlessness. Activities are well matched to the needs of pupils because teachers take good account of the assessment data available on each pupil. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, the teacher planned tasks that effectively engaged pupils of all abilities. Pupils were highly motivated by how stories are constructed and quickly grasped the idea of how stories have different sections that interconnect.

When teaching is less effective, teachers do not use the assessment data gathered on pupils effectively to provide tasks that motivate and stretch pupils, particularly for a small minority of boys in Years 3 to 6. As a result, these boys have not made enough progress with their writing. Teachers do not always manage the restlessness of a small minority of pupils. This results in some not understanding what to do next through lack of concentration. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise mental arithmetic. Inspectors agree that parents are right to have expressed concerns about the inconsistent setting of homework. This limits pupils' opportunities to practise key skills.

A good example of pupils with complex learning needs making good progress was seen in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were learning how to take notes. Support staff are fully involved in the planning of tasks and these pupils' personal development and progress is good as a result of their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and the school has met the demands of adapting the curriculum to include mixed age classes and additional year groups well. There is sound emphasis on the development of basic skills and improvement work is making this increasingly successful, although mathematics remains less developed. The programme for personal, social and health education helps pupils to develop personally, with the latter aspect being particularly successful. Pupils greatly enjoy the visits and visitors that help to enrich the provision. Despite the hard work put in to minimise the effects of the poor accommodation, this continues to have some negative effects, for example, because of the difficulty in providing outdoor learning for pupils in the Reception class.

A particularly effective feature of the curriculum that helps pupils with learning difficulties and those with complex needs to make good progress is the way that these pupils are fully integrated into all aspects of school life. The good programme of support for pupils with English as an additional language helps these pupils achieve well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. Pupils feel confident to talk about any difficulties they encounter and this helps ensure their well-being. Pupils are actively helped to understand how to live healthy, happy lives.

The attainment of individual pupils is systematically tracked and targets for future attainment regularly set and reviewed. This is well established in Years 1 and 2 and having a positive effect on progress. Systems are being developed in Years 3 to 6 but are not yet sufficiently embedded to be having full effect. Another important reason for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities making good progress is the quality of checks carried out on their work and the follow up in well targeted support to rectify any weaknesses. A feature of the good support for pupils with English as an additional language is the way that support staff get pupils to recognise words from images of their own country; this also helps them to settle quickly. There are good links with outside agencies that are drawn on as required.

Provision for child protection and health and safety are good. Good links with feeder playgroups help pupils settle into school quickly. Links are currently being developed with the secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, with the support of the local authority, has worked hard and successfully to address the serious weaknesses identified by the last inspection. A notable result of this is the significant improvement in standards in Years 1 and 2 brought about by better teaching. The actions taken by the school's leaders have shown that they can move the school forward. The priorities for improvement are clearly set out and are based on a good evaluation of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has successfully steered the school through a period of change, particularly with reference to staffing difficulties and reorganisation. There is a shared vision that centres profitably on the belief that every child matters. The school goes to good lengths to ensure that all pupils are treated equally. Many new systems and initiatives have been introduced, which are improving the progress pupils make. For the most part, these are working successfully. Good, rigorous systems, for monitoring the quality of teaching together with good staff development, have been influential in improving the quality of teaching. The weaknesses in the use of assessment in Years 3 to 6 show however that there are features of the school's work that are not working as well as they should be. The school is not complacent and has already identified that the standard of writing of a small minority of boys needs to be raised in Years 3 to 6 and that arithmetic needs to be improved. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and paints a picture of a school that now provides a satisfactory education and is well on the way to making further progress.

Through surveys the school has sought the views of parents. Parents speak well of the school and comment on how happy their children are there. They praise the headteacher and her staff for bringing about many improvements in the school. The school has responded positively to parents' views but has not done enough to satisfy those parents who have concerns about homework.

Governors challenge the headteacher when necessary, give the school satisfactory support and make sure statutory requirements are met. Although the school has a budget deficit, caused in part through long term illness and a fluctuating roll, governors are very aware of the need for recovery and have an agreed plan with the local authority to bring this about.

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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?	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	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?	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	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	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?	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?	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	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

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

As you know, we visited your school recently to find out how well you are doing. Thank you for looking after us and making us feel welcome. Thank you also for talking to us about your school, the work you have done and how well you enjoy coming to school.

What we liked about your school:

- many of you younger children do well
- your school is a healthy and safe place to be
- teachers and other staff in the school look after you well
- your headteacher is making sure that your school gets better quickly
- those of you who need lots of special support do well
- the people who run your school know what it does well and what it needs to get even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help some of you older boys to improve your writing by making better use of the information they have about you to set work which always makes you do your best
- give you more opportunities to improve your mental arithmetic.