



Highters Heath Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103365
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 282967
Inspection dates 9 November 2005 to 10 November 2005
Reporting inspector Cathryn Kirby HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Highters Heath Lane |
| School category | Community | | Kings Heath |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Birmingham, West Midlands B14 4LY |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 0121 4642459 |
| Number on roll | 209 | Fax number | 0121 4642459 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Reverend E Pitts |
| Date of previous inspection | 2 June 2003 | Headteacher | Miss J Connor |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| Age group 4 to 11 | Inspection dates 9 November 2005 - 10 November 2005 | Inspection number 282967 |
|-----------------------------|--|------------------------------------|

© 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

When Highters Heath Junior and Infant School was inspected in June 2004 it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on two occasions to monitor its progress. The school was inspected in November 2005 by one HMI and one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Highters Heath Junior and Infant School serves a local community which has higher levels of social deprivation than is the case nationally. Around a quarter of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds is broadly average. All pupils speak English as a first language. Numbers have fallen steadily over the last four years and there are now 181 pupils on roll.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Highters Heath Primary School is an effective school where every child matters. It has improved quickly since the last inspection. The caring ethos places pupils firmly at the heart of the school. The school is well led and managed. Standards remain below average, particularly in writing, as a result of weaknesses in past provision, but they are rising. The quality of teaching has improved rapidly, such that pupils make at least satisfactory progress in lessons. However, the pupils present some of their work poorly and marking is not always rigorous enough to help pupils improve rapidly.

The leadership and management below the level of the headteacher have improved considerably. Pupils make good progress in their personal development and make a positive contribution to the community. The care, guidance and support they receive are good. The curriculum adequately meets the needs of all the pupils and is enhanced by a range of enrichment activities. Systems for tracking the pupils' progress are effective in English, mathematics and science, but there is scope for further development in other subjects. The school has worked hard to improve links with parents, with some success. The pupils' attendance is slightly above average. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

The school is well placed to continue to improve. There is a strong emphasis on raising standards. The school's self assessment shows it has a reliable picture of strengths and weaknesses and appropriate plans to tackle these robustly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to raise standards, especially in writing
- increase the proportion of lessons where learning and teaching are good or better
- continue to develop the use of assessment
- improve the quality of marking and the presentation of pupils' work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The school's view is that achievement and standards are satisfactory and inspectors agree. Children enter Reception with skills below those normally expected. Well planned provision ensures they make good progress and are well prepared for learning. The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 classes has improved considerably since the inspection of June 2004 and is satisfactory overall. Standards are rising but remain below national averages. In 2004 standards at Key Stage 1 were below average. Provisional results for 2005 show standards have risen in mathematics and are broadly in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils at the expected standard for seven-year-olds in reading and writing remains below average. At Key Stage 2 standards were below average in 2004, although they had risen compared to

2003. Provisional results for 2005 in English and mathematics show the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 increased substantially and exceeded the school's targets. In science, standards improved and are broadly in line with national averages; two fifths of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5. These results represent at least satisfactory and often good progress between the ages of seven and eleven. The pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities make good progress.

The improvement in standards and the gains pupils make are due to better teaching and better use of assessment information to set work which is more accurately matched to the pupils' different abilities. The school is aware that standards in writing are below average and has appropriate plans to address this.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is good, although less attention is given to preparing pupils for the cultural diversity of today's society. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is slightly above the national average. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and their parents agree. They speak proudly about their school and the improvements made. The school develops pupils' confidence and self-esteem through a wide and exciting range of clubs and activities. Relationships in the school are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, like their teachers, and work well together. Many have mature attitudes to their work. Very effective systems in Reception ensure children quickly develop confidence and feel secure.

The school encourages healthy lifestyles although, despite the school's efforts, some pupils continue to bring unhealthy snacks. Pupils are suitably prepared for their wider role as young citizens, for example, through the school council or as peer mediators. The popular school bank enables pupils to understand how to handle money. Year 5 pupils work enthusiastically as cashiers. Pupils raise funds for charity and develop good community links through participation in local events.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was good in five of the nine lessons seen and satisfactory in four. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection in June 2004, when it was unsatisfactory overall, and accounts for the swifter progress made by the pupils. Changes to staffing, a more robust programme of lesson observations, and the sharing of good practice have contributed to this.

The best lessons are characterised by lively teaching and a brisk pace which engages the pupils, retains their interest, and helps them to learn. Lesson objectives and success criteria are shared with pupils in a way they can understand and well directed questions check that they have understood their work. Teaching assistants are used well to

support the pupils' learning. Teachers are becoming more confident in using information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to support learning. Assessment information is often used well to plan activities which meet the needs of all the pupils. Where activities do not capture the pupils' interest their attention wanders; consequently they do not make enough progress in their learning. Assessment information is used well in English and mathematics to track pupils' progress, identify underachievement quickly, and target appropriate support. There is scope for further development of this approach across all subjects. The presentation of some work is poor and marking is not always rigorous enough to help pupils improve rapidly.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a balanced curriculum. Work done on improving the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and mathematics has begun to have an impact on standards across the wider curriculum. Recent developments in science have focused on a skills based approach. This has enabled pupils to be more actively involved in their learning through practical investigations to help them understand science in the context of their everyday surroundings.

The school has considerably enhanced the resources available for teaching ICT. Good leadership in this curriculum area has ensured the quality of provision is improving rapidly. Work to develop other subjects is at an early stage and it is too soon to gauge the impact of this work on standards.

Pupils benefit from a range of creative opportunities which encourage their interest and participation in school work. These, together with activities at lunchtime and after school, enrich the pupils' experience and provide an opportunity for social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The arrangements for the care, guidance and support of pupils, including procedures for child protection, are good. Pupils who are vulnerable or have learning difficulties or disabilities are identified quickly and receive very good support. Parents appreciate this level of care and support and pupils say they feel safe and secure. Leadership in these areas is good and has a very positive impact on the well-being of pupils. The school works closely with outside agencies to ensure maximum support. Health and safety procedures are satisfactory. The very good pastoral arrangements in the school build the pupils' self-esteem and consequently they grow in confidence; this has a positive impact on their learning.

Induction procedures for the youngest children are thorough and they soon feel at home. The school works successfully with parents and provides helpful information, which is helpful in preparing their children for school. Successful procedures ensure transfer between key stages and into secondary school are smooth.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspection of June 2004 judged the leadership and management of the school to be unsatisfactory because the senior management team and staff were too dependent on the headteacher. There have been substantial improvements. The leadership and management of the school are good.

The headteacher provides clear direction and a sense of urgency. She has united the staff, raised morale, robustly tackled inadequate performance and has led improvements to the quality of teaching. She is well supported by the acting deputy headteacher who has driven improvements in standards in mathematics and science. The headteacher has effectively delegated the leadership and management of key areas of the school's work to coordinators, some of whom are relatively new to the school. They are rising well to the challenge of their new responsibilities and their work is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of provision. Appropriate training and support have enabled coordinators to develop their skills and confidence. All staff have worked hard to ensure that every member of the school community is valued highly.

Governance of the school is satisfactory. Members of the governing body have received training to enable them to fulfil their role more effectively. The introduction of link governors to year groups is a positive step. There are good arrangements for checking that action plans have been implemented and that things have improved. The school has a reliable picture of its strengths and weaknesses on which it has based a sound plan for further improvements.

Accommodation and resources are used very well to create a welcoming and stimulating environment which focuses on learning and celebrates the pupils' achievements.

The local authority has supported the school well through the provision of appropriate training and support for coordinators, teachers and governors. The link advisor's regular review and feedback on progress have been helpful to the school.

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? | 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 | 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 | 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? | 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 | 3 | 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 | 3 | 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

Highters Heath Primary School Highters Heath Lane Kings Heath Birmingham B14 4LY

11 November 2005

Dear Children

Mrs Johns and I would like to say how much we enjoyed spending two days in your school. Thank you for being so polite and helping us. We spent a lot of time finding out how well you are learning by watching you work in some of the lessons and talking to Miss Connor and your teachers. This is what we found:

- your good behaviour in lessons and at playtime helps to make your school a pleasant place to learn. Well done!
- you told us that you enjoy coming to school and feel that the teachers and classroom assistants are interested in you and take good care of you
- most of you listen to your teachers and try your best to answer questions and complete the work set
- attendance at school has improved. Well done to all those of you who have helped to make this happen!
- children now make better progress in their work and tests than they did a few years ago because of better teaching
- your teachers and all the staff have worked hard to make school a friendly place to be and to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable.

Your school has improved so much since I starting visiting it that I have decided that I no longer need to make regular checks. However, there are a few things which could make your school even better. We have asked your teachers to improve your school even more by:

- pushing you a little harder so that you are able to do better in your work, especially in writing
- making sure that all of you learn as much as possible in all your lessons
- checking more carefully how well you are doing in all your subjects and helping you understand what you need to do to make your work even better.

You can help too, by taking even more care over the presentation of work in all your writing books. Congratulations to you and your teachers for making your school a better place to work and learn.

Yours sincerely Cathy Kirby Her Majesty's Inspector