



Highfields Primary School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103946
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286817
Inspection date 21 September 2006
Reporting inspector Paul Edwards

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Beeches Road
School category	Community		Rowley Regis
Age range of pupils	3-11		B65 0DA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5591037
Number on roll (school)	462	Fax number	0121 5615651
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Jeremy Ross
		Headteacher	Helen Heap
Date of previous school inspection	16 September 2002		

Age group 3-11	Inspection date 21 September 2006	Inspection number 286817
--------------------------	---	------------------------------------

Amended Report Addendum

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

© 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

Highfields is a large primary school serving a deprived area of Sandwell. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds but the number of pupils learning English as an additional language is above the national average. When children start the Nursery, their attainment is below the level expected for their age. During the last two years, seven new teachers have been appointed.

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 with several outstanding features. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the exciting activities and parents are rightly pleased with the quality of care and education their children receive. As one parent said, 'I could not have sent my child to a better school. I am watching him grow and mature in a secure environment'.

When considering their starting points, pupils achieve well in all subjects by the time they reach the end of Year 6. Pupils do well to attain standards that are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. In 2005, standards were significantly above average in both English, mathematics, and science in national tests for Year 6 pupils. The consistently good teaching and outstanding curriculum are key factors in the progress made by the pupils. The school has rightly identified that occasionally a small number of more able pupils do not achieve sufficiently because less experienced teachers do not make the best use of the excellent assessment information which tells them how well pupils are achieving.

Children are provided with a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. Although there is an effective emphasis on developing the early skills of literacy and numeracy, much work is done to ensure the children enjoy their learning. As a result, they settle well and it is here that the basis for the pupils' excellent personal development throughout the rest of the school is underpinned.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy provide excellent guidance for new staff, enabling them to contribute well to school improvement. The headteacher, staff and governors work very well as a team. Whilst keeping a close eye on standards and pupils' achievement, the headteacher is successful in her desire to provide the pupils with the richest possible curriculum. The sound of all Year 3 children playing their trumpets and the confident speaking of French is a testimony to the diversity of the curriculum. The strength of leadership has enabled the school to make good progress since the last inspection and ensure it is well placed to improve further.

The school has a very clear understanding of what it needs to do to become even better. It recognises that some staff with posts of responsibility need to develop their skills in measuring the impact of initiatives to ensure they are having a positive impact on pupils' progress.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Ensure all teachers provide the more able pupils with work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Develop the procedures by which subject leaders can monitor the impact of strategies designed to improve the pupils' progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards attained in national tests at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 show that pupils achieve well overall. In 2005 standards were significantly above the national average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6. These standards are the result of consistent progress being made throughout all year groups. Pupils learning English as an additional language do well because of the very effective support and guidance they receive. Occasionally, a small number of more able pupils do not achieve as well as they should. In the Nursery and Reception Years, children make good progress and attain the level expected for their age in all areas of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is excellent. They thoroughly enjoy school and respond enthusiastically because as one pupil said, 'teachers make us feel good when we have done something right at school'. Their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils fully understand the importance of, and try to follow, a healthy lifestyle. Members of the school council were proud to describe their role in developing the 'huff and puff' club and other physical activities. Pupils take a full and active part in the community, participating in the Local Authority's Pupils' Parliament, acting as 'ambassadors' on visits to other schools, entertaining residents with their musical skills and supporting many charitable activities. There has been a steady improvement in the pupils' attendance over the last three years and it is now satisfactory. The school is doing all it can to improve it further.

The children's personal development is promoted very well from the time they enter the Nursery. Clearly planned activities enable them to develop their independence and to work well with their peers.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and this ensures that the pupils' progress is good in all year groups. Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and pupils respond well. The pupils make good progress because lessons are planned very well and teachers are very clear about what the pupils are to learn.

Teaching is well matched to the needs of most pupils. Those pupils learning English as an additional language are provided with good support ensuring they achieve as well as their peers. Occasionally, a small number of more able pupils could do better because less experienced teachers do not match the work closely enough to their needs. In the Nursery and Reception Years, good teaching of basic skills provides the

children with a very strong foundation for the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum has a very strong impact on the progress pupils make throughout the school. Whilst there is a very effective focus on improving reading, writing and numeracy skills, the pupils' enthusiasm for learning is increased through the vast range of exciting activities on offer. Starting in Year 3, all pupils are taught to play the trumpet, and French lessons are taught to all classes. Clubs enable pupils to learn hand chimes and Spanish, and professional sports coaches provide a wide range of physical activities on most days of the week. As one child said, 'there is always something interesting to do' and this was echoed by many parents.

In addition to the numerous visits and visitors, the pupils' understanding of other places is improved through residential visits to Portsmouth, France and Holland.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are provided with very good support and guidance. Very detailed and structured assessment of their work provides teachers with a very clear indication of how well they are doing. As a result, most teachers are able to match the level of work very closely to the pupils' needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language are assessed, guided and supported well, enabling them to achieve their potential. The pupils' understanding of their own attainment helps them to strive for the next level and to meet challenging targets. Pupils feel very safe and know who to turn to in the event of trouble. Older pupils are proud of their role in providing buddies for younger pupils and in helping them at lunchtime.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership provided by the headteacher and the deputy has helped to maintain the high quality of leadership seen at the time of the last inspection. The many new staff are provided with excellent training and support, enabling them to settle well. This is evident from their bubbly enthusiasm that helps them to provide such an exciting curriculum. However, the senior staff are keen to make the school even better. They recognise that less experienced staff need continued guidance on how to make the most effective use of assessment information and for subject leaders to improve their ability to determine the effectiveness of new initiatives.

The governors work very effectively with the school and the accurate self-evaluation is the result of excellent teamwork and regular consultation with parents and pupils in identifying how it might improve.

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

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 September 2006

Dear Pupils

Highfields Primary School, Rowley Regis, Sandwell, West Midlands, B65 0DA

Thank you all very much for the warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently.

I particularly liked these things

- Your excellent behaviour and your enthusiasm for lessons and other activities.
- The very good relationships you have with one another and with the staff.
- The interesting and very wide range of activities that you all undertake.
- The way you are looked after and supported by adults in the school.
- The way you are becoming aware of the importance of eating healthily and taking lots of exercise.

These are the things I have suggested those in charge of the school do to make it better

- Ensure that the teachers always give you work that is sufficiently difficult, particularly those of you who find it easy.
- Ensure that the adults in charge of the school monitor the effectiveness of new ideas that they introduce.

I am pleased that you enjoy school and wish you all the best for the future.

Thank you again for helping me with my work.

Yours sincerely

Paul Edwards Lead Inspector