



Highfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 107914
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287955
Inspection date 29 January 2007
Reporting inspector Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sandringham Green
School category	Community		Leeds
Age range of pupils	4-11		West Yorkshire LS17 8DJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2930155
Number on roll (school)	253	Fax number	0113 2930576
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr D Wilson
		Headteacher	Mr P Tindle
Date of previous school inspection	29 October 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

Description of the school

This average sized school serves an area of some social and economic advantage in the north of Leeds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average but most are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, although the proportion with statements of educational need is average. The school holds several awards including the Steven Lawrence Award, the Inclusion Chartermark, the Healthy Schools Award, and Investors in Pupils.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Highfield is a good school and gives good value for money. It is a happy, orderly and safe place whose greatest strength lies in the inclusive manner in which it helps its young people to grow as individuals. Pupils' all-round personal development is excellent because of the meticulous care and attention given to meeting the personal needs of each individual. Pupils enjoy coming to school, as shown through their consistently very good attendance. Parents are very happy with the support given to their children and the written comment, 'A strength of the school is that (my daughter's) personal, social and emotional development is valued as much as her educational attainment' is typical of many.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average and pupils' achievement is good overall. Pupils start school with the standards broadly expected for their age and they leave with standards which are normally above average. This indicates good progress. In 2006, standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 fell significantly because of complex issues concerning the organisation of teaching in that subject. This affected the overall progress made by pupils. The school has now successfully addressed these issues. Detailed and reliable measuring and recording shows that pupils are on track to achieve as well in English this year as they do in mathematics, although pupils' standards of writing are still not as high they could be and their work shows a lack of confidence.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school and are based firmly on the excellent relationships between teachers and pupils. Other adults give excellent support for all children who experience difficulties in learning. However, although lessons often have outstanding features, teachers do not always challenge pupils enough to make the best possible progress.

The curriculum is good and exceeds statutory requirements. Many pupils study French and all classes from Reception to Year 6 explore ideas through drama. A wide range of practical activities takes work beyond the classroom and 'makes learning real,' as one pupil put it. Many other enrichment activities such as trips, residential and other visits encourage pupils to take on responsibility. This contributes significantly to their personal development.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has developed a school which 'lays the foundations for life by offering a rich, enjoyable and fulfilling experience for all its pupils'. The leadership team knows its school well and provides clear direction to move the school forward. Staff are united behind senior leaders, and governors and parents support them. There is still work to do in ensuring that the school makes best possible use of all available data to set pupils appropriately challenging targets for improvement but it is well placed for further development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils make good progress in writing.

- Ensure that all lessons challenge pupils to make the best academic progress they can.
- Make better use of information about pupils' performance to set more challenging individual and group targets for improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils start school with standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally, although they vary from child to child. Because of good, well organised and well resourced provision in the Foundation Stage, teachers are able to identify different areas of individual weakness in children and take appropriate action to address them. Children thus make good progress and move into Key Stage 1 with well developed skills that enable them all to progress equally well.

In national assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2006, teachers measured the levels reached by children accurately and robustly and did not award the higher Level 3 unless pupils were secure in their understanding. This appeared to show a fall in standards from previous years, but assessed attainment more accurately.

By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2006, achievement was satisfactory and standards were average overall because complex difficulties with the organisation of teaching in English caused standards to fall significantly in that subject. This affected the overall progress made by all pupils, although progress in mathematics was good. The school has successfully eradicated the difficulties and very thorough tracking now shows that pupils are on track to achieve as well in English as in mathematics this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, as is shown by their consistently well above average attendance. They are well motivated and attentive in lessons and they collaborate well. Behaviour is excellent in classrooms and around the school. Pupils show very sensitive awareness of those few with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and reflects the inclusive nature of the school. It is demonstrated through vibrant displays of their work, their tolerance and understanding of each others' different views and the support they give freely to their peers when required. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of safe practices and healthy living. Older pupils are mature and articulate, expressing themselves fluently and confidently. They are well prepared for the next stage of learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Relationships between teachers, teaching assistants and pupils are excellent and help pupils become increasingly confident. Teachers have very high expectations of pupils in terms of their behaviour and their attitudes to learning and consequently pupils make very good progress in these areas. Pupils' understanding is increased when they take part in practical activities because they are inspired to speak and write about what they have seen and touched. The best lessons challenge pupils to develop their thoughts and ideas in writing. The school has correctly identified that this is not the case in all lessons. This is why achievement, though good, does not match the outstanding personal development pupils make.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good although the space for outdoor activities in the Foundation Stage is restricted. Growing links between subjects are beginning to enable pupils to use the skills learned in one subject in a range of other subjects. The school is seeking to extend these links to raise achievement. Very attractive wall displays throughout the school help to promote pupils' literacy and creativity. The school places a strong emphasis on the provision of a wide and enriched curriculum to support personal development and understanding. For example, pupils grow vegetables in the school allotment, then harvest, cook, eat and evaluate in writing the product of their labours. There are many opportunities for pupils to take part in a good range of sports, visits and residential activities. The view that taking part in extra-curricular activities 'is good for our brains and helps us to learn' typifies pupils' views.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good with some outstanding features. The staff's detailed knowledge of pupils' personal needs and where they are in their learning leads to an exceptionally calm, ordered and purposeful environment where pupils thrive. Procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe are in place. Staff vetting procedures are in line with statutory requirements and the school takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously. The school ensures that, where necessary, support from a broad range of health and education professionals is readily available. For example, work with the Autistic Partnership has ensured that pupils with this learning disability are fully integrated into the school and make very good progress. Excellent tracking of all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and very close links with parents builds confidence for everyone. This approach pays off in the two-way sharing of information between school and home, which enables the school to pitch its provision

at just the right level. Teachers systematically gather and record reliable information on what pupils know and can do. However, they do not always use this information to set sufficiently challenging academic targets and consequently academic progress is not as strong as it might be.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leaders and managers at all levels are successful in promoting good achievement and outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils. The school reflects the headteacher's inclusive educational philosophy and personal commitment to the rights of the individual. The leadership team has formed an effective partnership. With staff, it has built a positive and caring atmosphere where pupils flourish. Self-evaluation is thorough and the school has a good view of how well it is doing although it is too modest in its evaluation of some areas. Leaders now take a more realistic view of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly. The governing body is supportive, well informed and beginning to act as a critical friend. Issues identified as requiring attention at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the school has good capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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	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	2
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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly to me when I visited your school recently. I am writing to let you know what I found.

All of you, together with your parents and your headteacher, think that Highfield is a good school because everybody gets on well together, lessons are interesting and you come to school regularly and behave so well. I agree with all these points but most of all I think that the strongest part of the school is the way in which it helps each and every one of you to become polite, thoughtful and tolerant individuals who show great respect for each other. This absolutely shone out like a bright light. It does not happen by chance but because all the adults in the school take such meticulous care of every single one of you and strive to instil in all of you basic human standards of the highest order. You are very impressive examples of how well they have succeeded.

However, I think that the school could help you to do even better. I am asking your teachers to pay much closer attention to the progress you make in your writing and to push you much harder in lessons to do your very best. The teachers cannot do these things on their own and you will need to have more challenging learning targets. This means you will have to work even harder than you do now. I am confident that you will rise to the challenge.

Thank you once again for allowing me to experience the warmth and happiness that you bring to your school. May I wish you all good luck for the future.