



Highbury Primary School, Nursery and Day Care

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 116196
Local Authority Portsmouth
Inspection number 290453
Inspection dates 19–20 September 2006
Reporting inspector Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Dovercourt Road
School category	Community		Cosham
Age range of pupils	2–11		Portsmouth PO6 2RZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02392375404
Number on roll (school)	296	Fax number	02392380462
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr R Gratton
		Headteacher	Mrs D Morrell-Glenister
Date of previous school inspection	4 February 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
2–11	19–20 September 2006	290453

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of her Majesty's inspectors and two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Highbury Primary has extended school status. It has an attached nursery, breakfast club, after school provision and holiday club. Pupils in the school have social and economic backgrounds in line with national averages although a minority are socially disadvantaged. The school has below average percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals, with learning difficulties or disabilities and statements of special educational need. The movement of pupils in and out of the school is higher than the national average especially in Years 3 - 6. Attendance is in line with the national average

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

After a lengthy period of teaching instability, which adversely affected standards across the school, staffing is more settled and improvements have occurred in the last year particularly in the quality of teaching and learning. The senior management team have shown they are prepared to take robust action to tackle inadequate teaching. Documents to support curriculum planning do not sufficiently help teachers plan weekly and daily activities particularly for those pupils who reach higher than average standards and those in the mixed age classes.

Achievement and standards are good in the Foundation Stage but as a result of too many teacher changes and ineffective curriculum documentation, achievement and standards are inadequate in Key Stage 1 and 2. This does not support the development of pupils future economic well being. Pupils enter the school with average skill levels and make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Achievement is not sustained and pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with well below national average results in English, mathematics and science. The majority of pupils do not make the expected progress, especially during Key Stage 2. A number of parents also expressed concern over the progress their children make in the school. The school has recently engaged with the intensive support programme to help raise standards across the school. Early indications are that this is having a positive impact particularly in mathematics and at Key Stage 1.

The school has a number of new initiatives such as carefully checking the progress of pupils and setting targets for groups and different age classes. Although targets are displayed in classrooms, most pupils are unaware of them or how to improve their work further. Pupils do not have individual targets to meet their needs. It is too soon to see the impact of these initiatives on raising standards as they are not yet being used consistently in teaching and learning.

Pupils feel safe in school and are cared for well by adults. They are developing healthy lifestyles by eating healthy food and taking part in a range of physical activities. Pupils are able to make positive contributions to both the school and local community via the school council and working with local groups.

Senior managers have responded positively to suggestions made recently by the local authority and have set a clear agenda for improvement of the school over the next three years. This combined with recent improvements demonstrate the capacity to take the school forward, although this is not currently with the urgency necessary to bring about rapid improvement.

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising standards in all subjects at both Key Stages 1 and 2, improving the rate of progress that the majority of pupils make and improving curriculum planning to meet the needs of all pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Raise standards in English, maths and science and improve the rate of progress pupils make especially in Key Stage 2
- * Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching so all pupils are helped to achieve their potential
- * Improve curriculum planning to better meet the needs of all pupils

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are well below average and achievement is inadequate throughout the school, except in the Foundation Stage. Pupils enter the reception class with basic skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. They make good progress and, on leaving reception, the majority attain the expected levels for their age in all areas of learning. They achieve particularly well in personal, social and emotional development.

The results in 2005 at the end of year 2 and year 6 show a decline in standards and are significantly below national averages in English and mathematics at the age of 11. Pupils do not make expected progress and achievement across the school is inadequate. The majority of pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Results in 2006 show a slight improvement in mathematics at both key stages. This is because of improved teaching and involvement with the intensive support programme, although the school failed to meet its own targets for results in 2006. Writing is still a weakness throughout the school and girls achieve better than boys in both key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school is a calm and friendly community where pupils feel safe and behaviour is satisfactory. Relationships are good and pupils value and respect their peers. They understand right and wrong and are encouraged well to have regard for the feelings of others. For example in a Key Stage 1 assembly they reflected on how to look after nature and be kind to each other. Pupils have discrete opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures although they do not have a well developed understanding of living in multi-cultural Britain. Pupils welcome new children; they work and play harmoniously together. Reception children particularly work with enthusiasm and demonstrate impressive levels of concentration.

Pupils adopt safe practices when using outdoor play equipment and walking in and around the school. They are developing healthy lifestyles. The school's work towards meeting the Healthy Schools Silver award is an example of how seriously this is taken. Pupils make a positive contribution to the community by working with other schools and local groups and have designed a logo for the community. The school council, although not fully constituted at the beginning of the academic year, plays a

satisfactory role and the school frequently act on their suggestions. As pupils' standards and progress are inadequate they are not being helped to develop an understanding of economic well being. Pupils feel that homework should be more challenging and inspectors agree with them.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although they vary between inadequate and good. They are good in reception because teachers provide a calm, enjoyable and relevant learning environment where young children become confident learners and achieve well in all areas of learning. Teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 and 2 are satisfactory overall with some emerging good features notably the use of teaching assistants to support the learning of less able pupils or those showing challenging behaviour. However, inadequate teaching is seen when less able pupils are not provided with tasks to support their learning needs and pupils with higher skill levels are not sufficiently challenged. In many lessons there is over emphasis on teachers talking at pupils rather than actively involving them in their own learning. This has a negative impact on pupils' attitude to learning and some lose interest. There are only a few examples of effective marking giving clear guidance on what pupils do well or what they need to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum is inadequate as it does not meet the learning needs of all pupils; consequently the majority make inadequate progress. Planned work for literacy and numeracy has improved since the school has become involved in the intensive support programme although it is too early to see the full impact on raising standards. However there are limited examples of where these are used in other subjects. Progression is insufficiently planned to help pupils build successfully on their prior work especially in classes with mixed age groups. Documents for the curriculum to be covered during the year or term do not provide sufficient information to help teachers easily plan daily or weekly activities, with the exception of literacy, numeracy and ICT which use national programmes effectively.

The programme of enrichment, extra curricular activities and extended services are satisfactory. For example, learning about different cultures with assemblies on Diwali or taking part in workshops on African music. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about sporting opportunities, particularly learning karate. The breakfast and after-school club offer a safe and stimulating environment for pupils to begin and end the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory overall. Arrangements for child protection are good. The small minority of vulnerable pupils are supported well by staff who work closely with other agencies and families to safeguard children. Liaison with the school nurse provides effective family support.

Early identification is made of some pupils who need additional support and teaching assistants work well with pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities to help them feel safe and take full part in lessons.

The school has recently improved the system for assessing and tracking pupils' progress which is helping to identify the achievement of different groups. However the systems are not yet used consistently to have had a notable impact on improving the achievement of all pupils. Information is inconsistently used to actively involve all pupils in their own learning. The school has introduced clear targets for different groups but they are not specific enough to meet individual needs and many pupils are not aware of how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve. Reception age pupils progress well as their understanding of new concepts is checked during review time at the end of each session.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior management team have an accurate understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses, based on the new procedures for self evaluation and monitoring the schools work. They keep comprehensive records of the activities and where appropriate link these to teacher's performance targets. The information gained during monitoring is beginning to be used to bring about the necessary improvements in teaching and learning and is starting to have some impact on raising standards particularly in Key Stage 1. However the pace of development is too slow to bring about rapid improvement in the standards and achievement of pupils.

Senior managers and the governing body have recently set out a clear vision and direction for school improvement over the next three years which shows commitment to raising standards. However this has not yet had time to show full impact across the school. They have managed a difficult budget well in recent years and have made decisions to support better financial management for the school. They have evaluated the impact of decisions and made further adjustments such as reverting to single aged classes in Key Stage 1. Resources across the school have improved, particularly for information and communications technology.

Involvement in the intensive support programme has helped to develop the leadership skills of English and mathematics subject leaders who are very knowledgeable about their subject strengths and weaknesses. They are starting to use this knowledge well to monitor the subject, track the progress of pupils and better support teachers planning resulting in the slight increase in standards at Key Stage 1.

The governing body has recently been able to recruit new members and is now in a better position to develop their role as critical friend to the senior management team and understanding of their statutory responsibilities in monitoring progress of the school improvement plan.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you know, your school was recently inspected and I am writing to let you know what we found. I want to thank all of you for making us feel welcome and for talking to us about your school.

Here are the things we found that are best about your school:

- * You have started to have targets in lessons, they will help you know how to improve your work so try to use them all the time
- * You show care for each other and any new pupils that join the school and most of you behave well all the time
- * You eat healthy food and enjoy exercise especially karate
- * You have lots of opportunities to try activities other than in lessons
- * The school council has helped make decisions about what you want in school
- * You are looked after well by all the adults in the school.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- * Results that you get when you are at the end of Years 2 and 6 in English, maths and science and how quickly you learn your work
- * We think most of you could be achieving more and harder work should be planned for some of you than at the moment. We know some of you would like to have harder homework as well
- * The curriculum should help you build on your previous work better.

Thank you again for being friendly and we wish you well in the future.

Judith Rundle

Lead Inspector