

# Highgate Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120049
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	291612
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Driscoll

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Liz Mills
<b>Headteacher</b>	D Godfrey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 September 2002
<b>School address</b>	Heathcote Drive Sileby Loughborough LE12 7ND
<b>Telephone number</b>	01509 813968
<b>Fax number</b>	01509 813968

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves an industrial village in Leicestershire. There are relatively few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, as is the proportion with a statement of special educational needs.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector 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 aspects of the school's leadership and management, and the teaching, standards and achievement in mathematics and science. Highgate is providing an inadequate education for its pupils, despite the good start they now make in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2. Children arrive with standards that are below average. The good progress they make in their first three years means that their standards improve to slightly above average by the end of Year 2. In these years, teachers plan lessons that take account of pupils' abilities and choose activities that pupils find difficult, but achievable. Overall, however, achievement and teaching are inadequate because of weaknesses in Years 3 to 6, where standards fall to slightly below average. Until relatively recently the school had not adequately tracked the achievement of pupils, and this is still the case in science. Assessments are still highly inaccurate in many cases. Teachers have been unaware of the capabilities of their pupils, and which ones were underachieving. As a result, lessons in mathematics and science are not pitched at the right level and expectations are not high enough. Girls do particularly badly in mathematics because they are not sufficiently encouraged in lessons and so they lose confidence in their own ability. There are signs of improvement in other areas, though. Pupils make good progress in their reading in all years, while progress in writing has recently improved to a satisfactory level as a result of better teaching. The great strength of the school lies in the pupils' good personal development. They like coming to school because relationships are so positive. Pupils behave well and are polite to visitors. Even when they find tasks a bit easy, they work hard and always pay attention. Attendance had been falling, but the trend has been reversed this year. The school's satisfactory curriculum plays a significant part in developing pupils' understanding of right and wrong, while the very good pastoral care ensures every child is cherished and cared for. Overall, however, care, guidance and support are inadequate because of the failure to provide adequate academic support in Years 3 to 6. Marking does not make clear what pupils need to do to improve their work, and they are rarely given any idea of what standard they should be aiming for. The significant improvements in recent months reflect satisfactory leadership and management and show that the school's managers have the skills necessary to bring about change, but they have not acted quickly or decisively enough in the past and this is why the quality of education is worse than at the previous inspection. Standards and achievement are improving rapidly in the first three years, progress in writing is much better and the decline in attendance has been reversed. They now have a clear understanding of the weakness in achievement, but the checks on teaching, though improving, are not yet rigorous enough to identify the causes of the underachievement or to provide an accurate evaluation of the school's performance.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement in mathematics and science by ensuring that teachers are provided with, and use, information on pupils' capabilities to plan lessons that are suitably demanding.
- Improve the progress made by girls in mathematics by encouraging them to take a greater part in lessons.

- Improve assessment and marking to provide pupils with clear and accurate guidance on what they need to do to improve.
- Improve the rigour of monitoring to ensure managers clearly identify weaknesses in provision and check the progress made in addressing them.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Children join the Foundation Stage with standards below those expected for their age. They settle quickly and are soon forging ahead in all aspects of their development. They start Year 1 with standards that are average. Their good progress continues, so standards are slightly above average by the end of Year 2. From Year 3 onwards, progress slows so that achievement for all groups of pupils is inadequate and standards fall to slightly below average. Standards have been in slow decline for some years, especially in science, and pupils are no longer developing the skills they will need in later life. Pupils do not make enough progress in mathematics and science. The progress of girls is particularly poor in mathematics in Years 5 and 6, where almost all the underachievement is because girls are not doing well enough. There are some positives, however. Progress in reading is good, and progress in writing has been improved recently so that it is now satisfactory.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils want to do well. They concentrate and work hard in lessons. Pupils are tolerant where lessons lack appropriate challenge and continue to maintain positive attitudes and a willingness to learn. Pupils say how much they enjoy their school because everyone gets on so well with one another. This is evident in their very good behaviour and reflects their good understanding of what it means to be a responsible member of a community. Pupils are proud to be members of the school council and have been successful in bringing about improvements, for example, the impressive shade shelter in the playground which they helped to design. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, so pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong. They understand well how to stay fit and safe, choosing healthy options at lunchtime, for example, followed by very active play where pupils take care not to bash into any others on the playground.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

The contrast between teaching in the first three years and that further up the school is stark. Accurate assessments in the Foundation Stage mean that teachers in the first three years know the capabilities of their pupils and can plan suitably demanding lessons that challenge all pupils. In later years, teachers do not have such information and so cannot plan appropriately in mathematics and science. As a result, lessons are usually pitched at one level, with little difference in difficulty between tasks. This means that more-able pupils find the work too easy, and the less able find it too hard. Usually it is the former, because expectations are not high enough. Girls are not given enough encouragement in mathematics. In one lesson, for example, of 28 questions asked by the teacher, only three were asked of girls. This leads to girls losing confidence in their own ability and their progress gets slower and slower. Teaching in English is stronger, because the work is adapted to better meet the needs of pupils, some of whom

find their lessons inspiring. Marking is weak. Some pupils go for long periods without their work being marked in science.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has made significant changes to improve the curriculum, which are now raising standards, especially in English. The introduction of 'Big Writing' has all but eliminated any underachievement in writing, while the reading interventions for individual pupils have led to them making rapid progress. Individual education plans provide a good basis for the support of pupils with learning difficulties, but these are not always taken notice of in lessons. The good range of extra activities available to pupils supports the good work in personal and social education, and this has resulted in the school winning awards for its environmental and health education.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 4**

Pastoral care and support are very good. Pupils feel safe and are confident they can approach an adult if they have a problem. Rigorous procedures are in place for child protection and risk assessments are carried out appropriately. The school has raised parents' awareness of the problems associated with taking holidays during term time, so attendance has started to improve. Academic support is inadequate. Pupils do not receive sufficient guidance about how to make their work better. They are given very few targets to aim for, and it is rare for marking to point out errors other than spellings. Pupils' progress is now being tracked in English and mathematics, so the school is becoming aware of which pupils are underachieving. This is not the case in science.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There are some good elements. The first three years are well managed by the key stage coordinator, so standards are improving. The headteacher has introduced new initiatives to the curriculum that have raised standards and have provided teachers with examples of how good marking can improve achievement. There is now a much better focus on driving up standards. The managers have shown they have the skills to improve the school again, but have just not acted quickly enough in the past. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been slowly falling since the school was last inspected. The school has fallen behind others because it has not moved with the times. The accuracy of assessments has not been checked and systems for tracking pupils' progress have only recently been introduced. The headteacher has spent more time in the classroom and this has held back the way in which checks on teaching have been carried out. Governors have relied too heavily on the headteacher's opinion, without regularly checking for themselves that the school is moving forward. The result of all this was a school that was aware that standards are falling, but did not know why.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
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	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.



## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4
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	4
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

11 June 2007 Dear Children Inspection of Highgate Community Primary School, Sileby, Leicestershire LE12 7ND Thank you very much for helping us when we came to visit your school. Your parents and teachers can be very proud of the way you behaved and how polite you were. You told us that you like coming to school because everyone gets on so well together and there are lots of extra things to do. We agree. Your school is a happy place to be and all the adults make sure you stay safe, healthy and content. The youngest ones get off to a good start, and learn a lot until the start of Year 3. You quickly improve your reading as you move up the school. Unfortunately, we found that the school is not doing all it should to make sure you learn enough mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6 and your standards should be higher. The biggest problem is that teachers are not sure how good you are at these subjects, so give you work that is too easy or too hard. This also means that they cannot tell you what you need to do to improve your work and get better marks next time. Teachers can't do this because the people who run the school have not checked that the marks you are given are correct, or kept an eye on whether marks are going up or down. The school has not been getting better quickly enough because the people who run it have not been finding out what is going wrong. They are now improving things. You like 'Big Writing' and this has improved your work a lot. We think they can still do a lot more. So we have asked them to tell teachers how well you are doing in mathematics and science, so the teachers can plan better lessons and tell you what you need to improve. We have also asked them to carry out more checks to find out what is stopping the school from getting better, and then do something to put it right. Finally, the girls should be good at mathematics, but they are not being given enough chances to show what they can do in lessons, so they are falling behind the boys. So we have asked teachers to make sure girls do as much as boys in lessons. Make sure you get your hands up to answer questions, girls. Believe in yourselves; you can do it! With all best wishes for your future. David Driscoll Lead inspector