



Highfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102407
Local Authority Hillingdon
Inspection number 294489
Inspection dates 13–14 December 2006
Reporting inspector Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Charville Lane West
School category	Community		Hillingdon
Age range of pupils	3–11		Uxbridge UB10 0DB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01895230843
Number on roll (school)	242	Fax number	01895258338
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Mark Haley
		Headteacher	Mrs Jane Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school in a semi-rural area of Hillingdon. The nursery class is housed in a new purpose-built building. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average, as is the percentage of pupils who join or leave the school other than at normal times. There are more boys than girls at the school and in some year groups, this imbalance is particularly marked.

At its last inspection in October 2005, the school was found to require significant improvement. At the time, the headteacher had been in post for six weeks.

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 (5) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. In the words of one parent, 'Highfield has changed beyond all recognition from the school it was last year'. This rapidly improving school now provides a satisfactory standard of education and the effective headteacher, with the wholehearted support of staff, governors and parents, has made good progress in tackling the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection.

Children now get a fine start to their education in the nursery and reception classes which make up the Foundation Stage. Improvements made in the last year include the new purpose-built nursery building, and better opportunities for children to undertake stimulating activities, both indoors and in the refurbished outdoor areas. Across the school, pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards at the end of Year 6 are now broadly average and achievement overall is satisfactory.

Although a lot has been achieved in a short space of time, more remains to be done to consolidate the gains made. Standards are rising in English and mathematics because of the rigorous approach to tracking pupils' progress and much good teaching in these subjects. This now needs to be extended to science. Teaching is satisfactory overall and often good, but opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge more able pupils. As yet, subject leaders have not had the opportunity to observe teaching in their subjects to ensure that all teaching is consistently as good as the best.

Pupils are well cared for and this helps ensure they are safe, happy and promotes their good personal skills and self-confidence. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the growing number of clubs and activities a good deal and are proud of their work and the school. Academic support and guidance to ensure that all pupils reach their potential is satisfactory and improving. For example, the school has worked successfully with parents to emphasise the importance of regular attendance and to provide more information on how well pupils are achieving. As a result, attendance is average and improving further and pupils have a much clearer idea of their targets which they are on track to meet.

The popularity of the school has risen as a result of the many changes which have taken place. These have been warmly welcomed by parents and pupils. 'The dedicated headteacher, along with all the staff, have made Highfield a place I am proud to send my children to' is typical of their approving comments. The significant improvements and the strong leadership confirm its good capacity to carry on improving.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress in science
- Ensure that activities are consistently challenging for more able pupils
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better by developing opportunities for subject leaders to observe and share their best practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage from their varied starting points as a result of the good teaching. Most are working securely within the goals expected nationally for the end of the Reception year and a few exceed these.

Monitoring of the quality of teaching, and tracking learning through regular assessments, have made a significant impact on pupils' progress across Years 1-6. Standards overall are now broadly average and achievement is satisfactory. Results in the most recent national tests showed a significant improvement on recent years, particularly for pupils in Year 2 and in English across the school. An effective programme of support for writing is in place: results in English rose in 2006 and pupils made good progress. The majority of pupils make the expected progress, or better, except in science. Pupils generally meet their targets and there are no significant differences in how well girls and boys achieve.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils really enjoy coming to school and their attendance is satisfactory and improving. They have positive attitudes to learning, co-operate well and participate eagerly in shared activities. They show good awareness of different faiths and cultures and demonstrate respect to everyone in the school community. Behaviour in and around the school is good and reflects the school's 'no tolerance' of bullying or unsafe activities. As one pupil commented 'This is a safe and friendly school'.

The school has recently been awarded the national Healthy Schools' Award reflecting pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils were keen to advise an inspector on how to select a healthy and balanced meal from the excellent range of dishes prepared in the school's refurbished kitchens. Similarly, children in the Nursery enjoy helping themselves to fresh fruit snacks throughout their sessions.

Pupils contribute well to improving the school and feel that the school values their views and takes prompt action to respond to their ideas. The active school council has been involved in designing the new conservation area and providing a 'Welcome Pack' for new pupils. Pupils show a good awareness of wider issues by organising events to raise funds for a range of charities and are becoming increasingly involved in events locally. Rising standards and the recent award of the national Basic Skills Quality Mark reflect the fact that more pupils are acquiring the key skills they need to achieve in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers develop positive relationships and encourage shared activities and discussions well. Consequently, even the youngest children behave well and show concentration and perseverance. For example, children in the Nursery were delighted to help a puppet called 'Pip' sort her possessions out into things that begin with 's', 'w' and 'v'. Across the school, teachers make good use of resources, including the interactive whiteboards, to interest and involve pupils. Teaching assistants effectively help all pupils to understand and take part in activities. Much of the teaching is good, particularly for younger pupils. However this is not yet consistent. Opportunities are sometimes missed to challenge more able pupils and for pupils to develop greater independence in their learning. A new marking policy is improving pupils' understanding of how to make the next steps, although the quality of marking still varies too much.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It covers all subjects and helps pupils to develop their skills from one year to the next, particularly in English and mathematics. Information and communication technology supports learning across the curriculum and pupils are beginning to track and record their progress in this subject. Teachers make links between different subjects as in a Year 4 lesson where pupils learned how to draw and interpret graphs in mathematics and science. There have been too few opportunities for pupils to carry out their own investigations in order to improve standards in science further, which the school is currently addressing, as well as strengthening links between subjects.

After-school and lunchtime clubs are well attended and make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social skills and their fitness. Visits into the local community and beyond help pupils learn about their immediate locality and about the lives of others. There are effective links with local high schools, particularly in sport and music, which prepare pupils for their smooth transfer to secondary education. Similarly, there are good arrangements to prepare the youngest children for their 'move up' into the reception class.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school has good procedures to protect children and keep them healthy and safe. The school's improved system for tracking progress means that pupils experiencing difficulties are identified well and benefit from good support from additional staff. Additional programmes which help to meet pupils' particular needs are well managed and the school is carefully charting

their effectiveness. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities including pupils who are more vulnerable.

Teachers have improved the academic guidance they provide, which is now satisfactory. Termly targets are agreed in English and mathematics and are discussed with parents and pupils. Parents have recognised this improvement and feel they now have 'a better picture' of their child's progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher provides good leadership, which builds on people's strengths and has created a sharing culture based on mutual respect. She has helped staff to develop clear systems for appraising the school's work and identifying key priorities for development. These are manageable and are directed well to areas where they are needed most. Although the headteacher still takes a lead in many areas, management systems to share expertise and responsibility are satisfactory. For example, senior or more experienced teachers are paired with colleagues to jointly monitor and evaluate progress in subjects. Staff have observed good teaching in English and mathematics within the school and the success of this approach is visible in rising standards and better teaching. However, as yet, subject leaders have not had the opportunity to observe teaching in their subjects so that good ideas are pooled and expectations are shared. The effective governors have been linked to subjects and now closely monitor the quality of education which the school provides.

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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?	3
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	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	3

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?	3
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	2
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	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

We would like to thank you for helping us during our inspection by telling us all about the school and the things you do. As you know, the last time that inspectors visited your school they judged that there were some things which were not as good as they should be. You and your parents told us about all the changes that have taken place in the school since your headteacher arrived last year. You will be pleased to hear that we found that everyone's hard work has paid off. The improvements include:

- You are doing better in your lessons and in national tests, particularly in English and mathematics
- Your teachers are checking carefully on the progress you make and giving you targets to meet
- Your teachers are working together to check how you are doing in different subjects to help you make even better progress
- Your governors are keeping an eye on everything
- You are coming to school regularly.

There is a long list of other things which have got better too. For example, the youngest children are doing well in the new nursery and reception classes. Your governors have helped set up a really interesting website. Your new school kitchen is helping you to understand more about eating healthily. You are learning more, behaving well and helping each other. There are, of course, some things which could still be better. We have asked the school to help you to improve how well you do in science and to make sure that your work is always hard enough for you. We have also asked your teachers to share their best ideas by watching lessons to see what else they can learn from each other.

Mr Ewing and I were delighted to receive your thank you card at the end of our visit to your school. So thank you. No wonder all your visitors are so keen to return (or perhaps it is your new school lunches!). Whatever the reason for their visit, everyone is pleased to see all the changes and is looking forward to seeing your school get even better.

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector