

Highlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117904
Local Authority	Kingston-upon-Hull
Inspection number	301695
Inspection date	19 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Jackie Barnes

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	395
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Boughen
Headteacher	Mrs Jan Drinkall
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Lothian Way Bransholme Hull HU7 5DD
Telephone number	01482 835609
Fax number	01482 835640

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: the extent to which pupils in Key Stage 1 make the best progress they can; the provision for the most able pupils to achieve as well as they can; and the effectiveness of the school's leadership and management in identifying pupils' learning needs and providing effective support and guidance. Evidence was gathered from: the school's documentation including the school's self-evaluation; tracking systems and national test results; discussions with staff, governors and the local authority; parents' and pupils' views; and lesson observations.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is above average in size and includes over a hundred pupils relocated about a year ago as a result of the closure of a nearby school. The locality faces significant social and economic difficulties with an above average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. About one in three pupils has learning difficulties and/or disabilities which is significantly higher than most schools. Building work to provide additional facilities has been a feature of the school for some time and is now reaching completion.

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 that has improved considerably since the last inspection, especially in increasing the pace of pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 and so raising standards. It has responded well to the challenging circumstances of many of its pupils, particularly in providing a good curriculum that is well matched to their needs. It gives particularly good attention to pupils' emotional development while maintaining a focus on developing language and communication skills. It makes every day interesting with a high level of involvement in practical and physical activities. This approach contributes well to the school being a calm and happy place, with confident and busy pupils who are keen to show what they can do. The pupils feel safe because they know the staff give praise whenever possible, listen to their views, help them if they have a difficulty and are generally very caring. Pupils say, 'It's like having your mam in school.' Their enjoyment of school is clear in their enthusiasm for learning and is reflected in their improved attendance which is now average overall with many individual pupils having good attendance.

The school considers that pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding and inspection findings support this evaluation. Almost all pupils behave very well and they are also very keen to learn. They have exceptional awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses and how to manage their feelings. They are extremely knowledgeable about how to keep safe and healthy, and make good use of opportunities for physical activity. They place great value on their friendships with other pupils and their positive relationships with staff, and also take seriously their obligations to the school community. This shows particularly in the way the older pupils make sure everyone has someone to play with during recreational breaks and in the positive working partnerships in lessons. A very small number of pupils find good behaviour difficult to achieve, but as they are well supported by staff they do not impede the learning of others.

Pupils' achievement is good. Children start school with skills that are lower than is usual for their age and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1 almost all children have made significant improvements in what they know and can do, although few attain the level expected for their age. Over the next two years most pupils make satisfactory progress. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 show standards are below average because more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to reach higher standards. Nonetheless, it is clear that in reading and mathematics the majority of pupils have made steady improvements and are well prepared for further learning, although attainment in writing remains an area of relative weakness. In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress accelerates so that by the end of Year 6 it is good and standards are average. National test results for Year 6 indicate that the more able pupils attain especially well in mathematics and science. Results in English tend to be a little below average, although they have improved steadily in recent years. The school has a high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and they make good progress.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to provide a range of learning experiences which maintain pupils' interest, confidence and motivation to learn, especially when working with small groups and individuals. A wide range of teaching strategies is used effectively to support pupils, including class, individual and group work. Lesson plans only rarely identify the work to meet the needs of different ability groups in each class. Expectations for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1 are not always high enough. However, teachers in Key Stage 2 are more successful in setting challenging tasks that engage pupils and

ensure good progress. The management of pupils is good and they are keen to learn which enables them to contribute their own ideas, ask questions and respond well to guidance.

Parents particularly value the excellent care, guidance and support their children receive and are increasingly involved in working with their children at home. A typical comment on one of the school's initiatives reflected the parents' positive response that, 'Home/school challenge is great. I get to join in with my daughter and we do the work together.'

Leadership and management are good. The school is effectively led by those with responsibility at all levels, including governors. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, with excellent support from the deputy, has turned a shared vision of school improvement into a reality with the help of well motivated staff. Challenging circumstances in the locality, in the development of the building and in the incorporation of pupils from a closing school have been managed effectively. Exceptionally good use of assessment data, which is thoroughly analysed, evaluated and understood by staff, has enabled the school to set challenging targets. The school also keeps a close check on the progress of individual pupils and provides well targeted support. The school's self-evaluation is excellent and is having a positive effect on the improvement in standards. This is because it is accurate and very well based on data and the views of parents, pupils and governors. Capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage, which is housed in a new building that facilitates a good range of indoor and outdoor activities. Many children have skills and knowledge below that typical for their age when they enter school. Effective teaching ensures that their good progress is regularly monitored. The emphasis on developing personal and social skills, together with language and communication is effective and fits well into a wider programme of teaching and learning suitable for pupils of this age.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English throughout the school.
- Improve achievement for the more able pupils in Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Set tasks that are more closely matched to pupils' needs.

Annex A

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

22 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highlands Primary School, Kingston-upon-Hull, HU7 5DD

Thank you for helping me to see how much you enjoy school. I was impressed how well you know how to keep safe and healthy and how those of you with responsibilities take them seriously and are so reliable. I was especially pleased to see that younger children settle into Nursery quickly and that they love learning. I could also see you are all exceptionally well cared for and helped by the staff, and your parents agree. Almost all of you are very well behaved, and if you make a mistake you listen to your teachers and try not to do it again. Your teachers are very committed to making sure you make the best progress you can, and most of you do by the time you leave for secondary school, with at least average standards. Well done.

Your teachers are going to make sure that, your learning is carefully planned to be challenging enough to help you attain the highest standards. The staff are also going to help you to do as well as you possibly can in your English work. I know that you will help by continuing to go to school every day and keep up your good behaviour.

My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Jackie M Barnes

Lead inspector