

# Highbury Quadrant Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100431
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	307387
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Kathryn Taylor

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	342
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs K Tolson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss T Higgins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 December 2004
<b>School address</b>	Highbury New Park London N5 2DP
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7226 6531
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7359 0402

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In this large school, the majority of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a well above average proportion are from homes where English is not the first language. The percentage of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Learning difficulties mainly relate to moderate and specific learning, speech, language and communication and behavioural, emotional and social needs. Entitlement to free school meals is very high. The school has gained the Activemark and Kite Mark awards and has full extended school status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Highbury Quadrant is a satisfactory and rapidly improving school. It has developed good partnerships with parents, has a warm, welcoming ethos, and a strong sense of community.

Since the last inspection, strong leadership and governance have enabled the school to lay firm foundations for continued improvement and move forward considerably. Leaders have addressed the legacy of weaknesses in assessments, in teaching and the substantial budget deficit. Staff and leaders have had a good impact on improving behaviour, pupils' enjoyment in learning, their participation in school and decision-making.

Satisfactory teaching and learning have led to pupils' satisfactory progress. Although good improvements have been made, teaching and progress are not yet consistently good in every class. There are strengths in teaching across the school, including the Foundation Stage, for example in planning, classroom organisation, relationships and behaviour management. There is also enough good teaching to have ensured that standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 have improved significantly during the current year and these are better than ever. Other factors contribute to better standards and achievement. These include higher attendance rates, good 'catch-up' programmes and rigorous monitoring of teaching, learning and pupils' progress so as to improve them. In addition, the school is good at checking how well different groups of pupils are performing, then finding ways to modify provision to address any underperformance.

Pupils are well cared for. They say that: 'The staff take good care of you.' and, 'Teachers don't give up on you.' Pupils and their families are supported effectively to deal with any personal difficulties or barriers to accessing school and learning. Good examples of this are the projects aimed at helping parents to improve their own knowledge of English, and those to understand the school's approach to teaching and learning. These have been very successful in helping parents from different community groups to not only assist their own children, but also to work as volunteers to support others. Academic guidance is good overall. Pupils know what they are meant to learn, how well they are doing and their targets for improvement. Day-to-day feedback to pupils through marking, however, is inconsistent between classes.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils behave well, have good attitudes to learning, and get on well together. They show consideration for the needs of others. Relationships and racial harmony are particular strengths in this school. Consequently, the school is a very harmonious community. Staff treat pupils with kindness and respect, thereby providing good role models and the expectation that pupils will behave in the same way. A good range of visits, after-school activities and cultural events capture pupils' interests, promoting their enjoyment and participation in school and the local community. An excellent example of this was seen in the very successful international evening, which took place during the inspection. This was a very sociable event, which many parents and members of the local community happily shared with pupils.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. Following a local authority inspection last year, the school made some key improvements to both Nursery provision and to outdoor learning and assessments across the Foundation Stage. Better assessment of children's attainment on entry means that work and activities are being tailored to address any areas of weakness. Teaching

and learning are satisfactory. Staff provide an appropriate mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities. These ensure the basic skills are taught and enable children to develop confidence, independence and the ability to work collaboratively with others. Staff interact well with children during independent activities to support and check their learning and develop speaking and listening. Better tracking of children's progress is helping to ensure that children with additional needs are now being identified and supported more promptly. Due to financial restraints, resources, including the large outdoor play equipment, have become shabby and are in need of refurbishment. The Foundation Stage leader has a clear picture of children's progress, strengths in provision and where improvements are still needed.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise standards and enable all pupils to make good progress by making teaching more consistently good.
- Strengthen academic guidance by ensuring that day-to-day marking provides clear guidance to pupils about the strengths and weaknesses in their work.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspections.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from a well below average starting point on entry to school. Although standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been well below average for the past few years, recently they have improved significantly. Writing standards are now average in Year 2, while reading and mathematics standards are below average, but closer to those expected. In Year 6, standards in English and mathematics are average and science standards are above average. These improved standards represent good progress over time for pupils currently in Years 2 and 6. There are encouraging signs of improving rates of progress, and some pupils making accelerated progress in other year groups, though as yet progress is not consistently good in all classes.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils really enjoy school and learning. They work hard because they want to do well. Behaviour in class, around the school and in the playground is good. Pupils say that they feel safe and happy to be at school. They are confident to approach staff if they have any worries or concerns and say that any incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles through the school's strong emphasis on healthy eating and exercise. They contribute well to the school and help ensure that it runs smoothly. For example, older pupils help younger ones with their learning and act as buddies at break times. All pupils contribute to decision-making because the school is good at seeking and acting on their views. Improvements in basic skills, positive responses to learning and the ability of pupils to work well both independently and together, means they are well prepared for secondary education on leaving.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. They are consistently good in a few classes. General strengths include teachers' planning, classroom organisation, behaviour management, and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support teaching and learning. Teachers routinely explain the purpose of lessons and activities in plain and simple language. As a result, pupils focus on their learning and individual targets, and are increasingly able to assess how well they are doing. Teaching assistants are well trained and briefed and therefore provide good support for learning. During the past year, coaching and staff training have improved staff skills in helping a high proportion of pupils who learn English as an additional language to extend their vocabulary, confidence and fluency in speaking. The school has rightly identified a need to extend this good practice to mathematics teaching, to extend pupils' vocabulary and to help them explain their methods of mental and written calculations. A weakness of teaching relates to marking. This generally provides encouragement and some provides detailed guidance about how pupils can improve, but this is not consistent, and some books are not marked regularly.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and has some good features. Strengths lie in a wide range of enrichment activities. A good number of visits and visitors contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school. The wide range of after school clubs, chosen largely by the pupils, are well attended. Homework clubs, taught partly in a range of home languages, are particularly useful in involving parents and in helping children to improve their attainment. ICT is used well to support learning. Pupils were seen confidently using a range of programmes during lessons. Much has been done in the past year to improve early identification of pupils' learning difficulties. The school's more favourable financial position has enabled them to provide more interventions and good 'catch up' programmes during the past year, to accelerate the progress of underperforming groups. This is having a good impact on improving pupils' basic skills, especially in English. The school has rightly identified that the next step is to make further adaptations to the curriculum to ensure it reflects pupils' backgrounds and interests more closely, and ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are developed as part of pupils' work in other subjects.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

Staff know pupils and families very well and build very trusting relationships with them. Risk assessments are carried out regularly and pupils' well being is given priority. Staff have forged good links with external agencies to support pupils, including those who are particularly vulnerable. Consequently, parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils' efforts and achievements are rewarded, thereby raising their self-esteem and motivation. Academic guidance is generally good. Pupils know when they are doing well and understand their targets for improvement.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher's confident leadership and determination to make things better for the pupils have been the driving forces behind the many improvements. These, along with the shared vision and strong support from the very capable deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, provide the school with a good capacity for further improvement. Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. The school is setting and reaching challenging targets across the board. Monitoring and evaluation of standards, pupils' progress, teaching and learning are rigorous and incisive. Therefore, the school knows what is working well and clearly identifies and addresses weaknesses. Staff training, coaching and more rigorous performance management are helping to build a stronger teaching team. Governors are well informed, very involved and supportive of the school. They monitor the school's work and the budget well. This has helped to resolve the large financial deficit and ensures governors provide a good level of challenge.

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## 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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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?	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?	2

<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>	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	2
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**

01 September 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Highbury Quadrant Primary School, London, N5 2DP

Thank you very much for making us welcome when we visited. We really enjoyed talking to you, looking at your work and finding out about your school. We think that Highbury Quadrant is an improving school which provides a satisfactory standard of education. We were very pleased to find that standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 have improved greatly this year.

It was good to see that you really enjoy school and listen well to your teachers. You are friendly, sensible, and polite and you behave well. This helps ensure that your school is a happy place that runs smoothly. Staff help you if you have any problems. They encourage you to do well and to develop good relationships. You told us about how you stay fit and healthy and that staff provided interesting tasks for you to do, including visits, after school clubs and homework clubs. We noticed how hard you work and that you are confident in using computers and the interactive whiteboards. We like the way that pupils from different backgrounds get on so well together and enjoyed seeing this and watching you perform at the international evening.

Your headteacher and the staff have made many improvements and are always keen to make things even better. We have asked them to continue to improve lessons so that you all make good progress. We have asked your teachers to mark your work regularly, so they can provide detailed information about how well you are doing and what you should do next to improve.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by taking good care of each other, so that your school continues to be a very happy place to be.

Yours sincerely,

Kathryn Taylor

Lead Inspector