

Highfield Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101663
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	307770
Inspection date	21 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C Collins
Headteacher	Mr J Wood
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	Highfield Drive Shortlands Bromley BR2 0RX
Telephone number	020 8464 7804
Fax number	020 8464 7804

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' achievement, the quality of the school's provision for writing, pupils' personal development and well-being and the effectiveness of leadership and management. In addition, evidence was gathered from discussions and school documentation to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and care, guidance and support. 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 in this report.

Description of the school

Highfield is a larger than average infant school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average - as is the proportion with English as an additional language. The substantive headteacher left the school at the end of last term and the deputy headteacher is currently acting as headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Highfield Infant School provides an outstanding education for all of its pupils. The acting headteacher, acting deputy head, all staff and governors continue to provide highly effective leadership. The school provides a warm, caring environment where the excellent welfare for each pupil ensures their outstanding academic and personal development. As one parent, expressing the views of many, succinctly said, 'Brilliant teachers - communication with parents fantastic - very lucky to have my children at this school.'

Children enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually broadly in line with, or just above, those expected for their age. By the time they leave standards are consistently high because the quality of the teaching and use of assessment are excellent. The school's data shows that their focus in the last term on writing has been very successful. In the 2007 national tests, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading and mathematics was much higher than in most schools and this is now the case in writing. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make outstanding progress. Having been given many opportunities to develop their own individual skills, support staff make an outstanding contribution to the developments of these pupils. Those pupils who have statements of particular special need make exceptionally good progress. Very careful assessment of their needs means that they are provided with effective individual learning programmes and support. Detailed school tracking data shows that this intervention is very carefully focused and monitored, and very successful. One parent with a child with specific needs wrote to say how grateful she is, affirming that, 'The staff at Highfields have given her the best possible start to her education by ensuring that she can fully access the curriculum.'

Throughout the school, teaching and learning are often outstanding. Lessons are very well planned, making sure that all pupils enjoy learning. The atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is supportive and caring. As a result, by the time they leave the school, pupils develop into well-rounded individuals because of their excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils show very caring attitudes to each other and have an excellent understanding of healthy living and keeping safe. Parents, who enjoy a close relationship with the school, value the education that their children receive. They make an excellent contribution by supporting their children's learning and by generously supporting 'Friends of the School' fund raising events. As one parent wrote who had moved her child to the school, 'I was so impressed with Highfield in terms of the friendly atmosphere, approach to learning, extra-curricular clubs and parental involvement.'

There are very rewarding partnerships with the community and with other schools and organisations. An example that all pupils spoke warmly about is the Saturday sports club run by former pupils and parents, as well as dedicated staff members. The curriculum covers all subjects very well and is enhanced by an outstanding range of additional activities. However, school leaders are not complacent and are seeking to improve the school even further by continuing to refine their planning to ensure their lessons are as relevant as they can make them. They are aiming to give pupils the fullest possible opportunity to use the high level of basic skills they have acquired in other subjects. They have also acknowledged that the use of displays in some parts of the school to excite, inspire and reward pupils could be better.

The acting headteacher continues to provide first-rate leadership and management. As one parent observed, '...the acting head/deputy have been doing an excellent job and there has

been no difference apparent to parents.' There is a real sense of a team working together and the administrative team, site manager and lunchtime staff, are considerable assets to the school and are very much appreciated by all concerned. The excellent governing body play a very successful part in supporting and challenging the school. They are firm in their resolve to provide the very best for every child in their care. This is very apparent in their zeal to replace the mobile classrooms with the outstanding new classrooms now on site. This project took some time but their resolve never wavered and the outcome is very impressive. The school's track record of consistently raising standards, and meeting pupils' needs through their very effective monitoring and evaluation systems, shows that it has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education in the Reception classes. They settle into school very quickly because of the very good induction procedures the school has in place. One parent wrote, 'My son only started school in September '07, and has started very well. He comes home every day with new things he has learnt. His reading is fantastic and is a credit to the teachers.' All children make rapid progress and achieve exceptionally well, especially in speaking and listening and in their social and emotional development. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. In one session observed, the enthusiasm and enjoyment of the children as they handled and discussed their different houses was infectious. The rooms available are stimulating and resources are used well as children move from one to another. The very well resourced outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation. A very calm and purposeful atmosphere is created where the children who only started school a few days ago are already making excellent progress. Staff have already got to know these children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well.

What the school should do to improve further

- The school should explore ways in which to refine the curriculum further to make sure that links between subjects help pupils to use their skills widely and to make learning as relevant as possible.

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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?	1
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
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	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

29 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Infants' School, Bromley, BR2 0RX

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school. I enjoyed my time with you and would now like to tell you what I found out about your school. I agree with what many of you told me - Highfield is an excellent school.

I think you all do very well and really try hard at all times. You are especially lucky to have so many different activities, both during and after school. I also saw how keen you are to take part and how well you behave. Many of you told me how much you enjoy being at school, and how proud you are of what you can do. I am sure that you will continue to try hard so your school can be the fun place that you like, and where you can all learn.

Your teachers are always trying to help you do even better in lessons. I have asked them to make sure that, as they carry on making things even better, you are given the opportunity to use what you have already learned in as many ways as possible, and that all the displays around the school are as exciting as some of them already are. You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what the teachers say. Then you will all continue to make really good progress in your learning.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all your help. I wish you well in the future.

With kind regards,

David Marshall

Lead inspector