

Highfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132203
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	315965
Inspection dates	11–12 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Judith Dawson

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	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bevin Betton
Headteacher	Mrs Maria Kemal
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2003
School address	Highfield Road London N21 3HE
Telephone number	020 8360 2149
Fax number	020 8360 4875

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves a diverse community with most of the pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority of pupils have English as an additional language with a few in the early stages of learning English and there are a significant number of families who are refugees or asylum seekers. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times during the year is above average. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is over twice the national average. Slightly more pupils than average have moderate learning, speech and language or emotional difficulties or physical challenges. The school has Language Centre and Healthy Schools Status and holds the Leading Parent Partnership award. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have recently been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Highfield Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. The new headteacher has swiftly identified the reasons for limited achievement by pupils and weaknesses in provision. She has made astute plans for improvement. The headteacher, along with the new deputy headteacher, have established systems for tracking pupils' progress, identifying and providing effective support for pupils with specific needs, and monitoring teaching and learning. Phase and subject leaders have just been appointed and are being trained to carry out their roles. As yet, they lack the skills needed to monitor and develop the curriculum. The impact of this rigorous and effective leadership is beginning to show through pupils' now satisfactory achievement, and improving teaching and learning.

Although standards have dipped in recent years, they are now beginning to improve. In the 2007 National tests, standards in Year 6, while below average, improved on the previous year. However, pupils' achievement from when they were Year 2 was still inadequate. This has been addressed and pupils now in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 2, although standards are still slightly below average. Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics, where standards were average in 2007. This is where teaching and learning are consistently good. All pupils behave well and most enjoy school, especially the rich cultural experiences the school offers. The school has implemented rigorous systems for monitoring attendance, which has improved significantly this year.

Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and all have created attractive and stimulating environments for learning. They use resources, especially information and communication technology (ICT), to support learning well. Teachers plan their lessons conscientiously, sharing their intentions for learning with the pupils. The good teaching in Years 1, 2 and 3 is because teachers have high expectations of pupils and meet their needs well. Although there are pockets of good practice through the rest of Years 4, 5 and 6, some teaching is just satisfactory. While some teachers use their knowledge of pupils' abilities to match their lessons to reflect pupils' individual needs, this is not a feature of all teachers' practice. In a few classes the presentation and content of pupils' work is often poor because the teachers do not expect enough of their pupils and marking is unhelpful. Pupils who receive additional support for learning or for help in learning English are taught well. As a result, many pupils who join the school with limited English during Key Stage 2 achieve as well as their peers. Recent improvements in the curriculum are providing opportunities for pupils to use their skills across several subjects. Pupils say how much they enjoy this. However, the curriculum for science, while satisfactory and providing more opportunities for scientific investigation since the last inspection, does not ensure progression from year to year.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The school provides children in the Foundation Stage with a satisfactory start to their school lives. Children are well cared for and swiftly form good relationships with their peers and adults in school. They learn happily alongside each other and enjoy the range of activities on offer.

The recently developed curriculum ensures a good coverage of the six areas of learning and an appropriate balance of teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Activities are interesting, enabling children to learn in relevant and meaningful ways. For instance, in the Nursery, children

were engaging in role play in the 'Garden Centre' and they had opportunities to plant sunflower seeds as part of the theme on growth. Adults make daily observations of children's learning that includes a focus on individual children. Although children's progress is satisfactory, there is not yet a systematic approach for tracking all children's experiences during the day. The school has accurately identified that assessments, of what each child can do, are not accurate enough to ensure a good match of activities to children's needs. The Nursery staff are piloting an approach to support this process. The Foundation Stage leader is new to the post but has a clear understanding of the improvements needed to enable children to achieve well.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the skills of subject and phase leaders in monitoring and developing the curriculum and accelerating pupils' progress.
- Improve pupils' learning by ensuring teachers match work more carefully to their individual needs.
- Raise expectations of the quality of pupils' handwriting, the presentation of their work and the care of their books.

A small proportion of 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 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory although standards are still below average. Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills below those expected, many with limited knowledge of the English language. Standards remain below average at the end of the Foundation Stage but improve by the end of Key Stage 1 and are average. Many pupils join or leave the school after Year 2 and pupils' progress, until recently, was not tracked. This resulted in some inadequate progress over the last two years and below average standards in English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in science were low. The school's data shows that pupils now in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress while pupils in Year 5 are working at average levels for their age. Pupils who have learning, emotional or physical difficulties have good support and achieve as well as their peers. Although achievement is now satisfactory overall, it is uneven through the school because of the variations in the quality of teaching and learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils regularly contribute to charities and to the local community. They make a good contribution to ensuring the school runs smoothly, for example through helping around the school, making suggestions and through the school council and buddy system. This and their increasing use of ICT, English and mathematics skills across the curriculum give them a sound foundation for their future lives. Pupils are proud of their school and achievements and are keen to gain the many rewards on offer. Racial harmony is very good and pupils enthusiastically celebrate the rich variety of different cultures in the school. They are polite and friendly and they behave well. Pupils develop a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, supported by the school's strong focus on fitness and exercise and organised games at lunchtimes. While most

enjoy school, some older pupils say that they do not enjoy their writing and science work, because they find the vocabulary challenging or because they do not understand what is being taught.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, consistent expectations for good behaviour, and focus well on pupils' personal development and well-being. They work closely with teaching assistants, who make a valuable contribution to learning. Some teachers are skilled in generating enthusiasm and a good pace of work so that each pupil achieves well. However, lessons are not always adjusted to challenge pupils of differing abilities and some teachers do not respond sufficiently to pupils' answers to their questions or consider how well pupils have learnt when planning the next lesson. As a result, some pupils struggle and have to rely on adult support to complete the task, while others do not fully achieve their potential because work is too easy for them. Some pupils' work is very untidy because their teachers do not expect enough of them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is being continually adapted to meet pupils' needs more closely. Consistent approaches to reading across the school are showing improvements in standards, for example, as are the support programmes for small groups of pupils in mathematics. The leadership team has accurately identified weaknesses in the provision for science and is providing training for the subject leader to improve progression from year to year. Pupils and parents appreciate the interesting range of extra-curricular activities and pupils say how much they enjoy using ICT across the subjects. For example, pupils in Year 6 produced 'PowerPoint' presentations when writing biographies of historical figures. Partnerships with other organisations also enhance learning. Visits to the City Learning Centre have resulted in good quality work in ICT and English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral support for pupils is very good. As several parents commented, 'The school is very welcoming and has a good sense of community.' The staff are very aware of pupils' personal needs, particularly the most vulnerable pupils, who are very well supported. Strong links with parents, health professionals and other external agencies also contribute well in this regard. Pupils therefore feel safe and secure in school. They know they can turn to an adult for help when needed, including the learning mentor and special needs staff who play a key role in this area. Pupils with emotional difficulties have very good support, which enables them to achieve as well as their peers. There are robust procedures for child protection and to eliminate other risks. New initiatives are increasing pupils' awareness of what they are expected to learn and their targets for improvement. In most classes, teachers' marking is effective in pin-pointing mistakes and guiding pupils about what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership team's promptness in identifying the school's weaknesses and implementing effective plans to address them has already generated improvements across all aspects of school life. Teachers are now clear about what is expected of them, as a result of the monitoring of teaching and learning, and have targets for improvement. Well-crafted systems for tracking pupils' progress identify when they fall behind, and are used to provide good additional support. Teachers are now more knowledgeable about their pupils' progress and have the information they need to match their lessons more closely to individual needs. Subject and phase leaders, some very new to their roles, have a clear understanding of what needs to be done but need support to hone their leadership skills. However, all these improvements are very new and there has not yet been time to evaluate their impact. Leaders know there is still some way to go before the improvements make enough impact on pupils' learning. Governors are supportive and ambitious for their school. They are developing their involvement in monitoring improvements. The school has made good use of local authority support to provide additional help and training where it is needed most. Improvements have been carried out sensitively, maintaining good staff morale and a desire to raise achievement. This provides a secure foundation on which to continue to improve.

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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	3

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	2

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	3
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

26 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Primary School, London, N21 3HE

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and hearing your views. We were all impressed by your hard work and good behaviour as well as the way you respect and take care of each other. We know you feel safe and well-cared for in school and know how much you appreciate all the extra activities your school provides and your attractive classrooms. You have produced some beautiful artwork and we enjoyed listening to those of you in the orchestra. Don't forget to smile during your performances!

We know that, although you all work hard and make satisfactory progress, some of you struggle to understand your work while others find it a bit too easy. We have asked your teachers to make sure that they look at how well you are doing and plan lessons that give all of you exactly what you need to help you make even better progress. Some of you have really good help with your learning or to improve your English language. We want all of you to succeed as well as you can. Many of you take a lot of pride in your work and your books show how hard you try to do your best. But some of you have very untidy books, poor handwriting and even scribble on the outside! We want you to take more care over the presentation of your work and have asked your teachers to insist that you do. It is now up to you. When all these things happen, we are sure that you will enjoy your English, mathematics and science lessons as much as the rest.

You have a satisfactory school and your headteacher and deputy headteacher are working very hard with all the staff to make sure that your school becomes a good school. We would like the other leaders who have special jobs, to learn how to help teachers to plan better the work that you need to do.

Best wishes

Mrs Judy Dawson

Lead Inspector