

Highfield Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101664
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	323505
Inspection date	21 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Alison Thomson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	381
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karen Henderson
Headteacher	Mrs Karen Bigg
Date of previous school inspection	28 September 2005
School address	South Hill Road Shortlands Bromley BR2 0RL
Telephone number	020 8460 2597
Fax number	020 8466 8236

Age group	7–11
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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 following issues:

- the impact of leadership and management on the drive to raise standards and achievement, with a particular focus on vulnerable pupils and higher-attaining pupils in English
- the consistency of teaching and learning and academic guidance in raising the progress of all pupils
- the effectiveness of the support for teachers new to the school.

Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data; the school's self-evaluation, assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work, including lessons; discussions with the chair of governors, members of staff and pupils; and the questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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

Highfield Junior is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. There is a higher-than-average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, although the number of pupils whose first language is not English is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who have a statement of special educational needs, is lower than average. This includes a group with moderate learning difficulties and a group with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There is private childcare provision on site, with a breakfast club and an after school club. The school has the Healthy School Award and the Activemark accreditation for the promotion of physical activity. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Highfield Junior is an outstanding school of which pupils and parents are justifiably proud. It provides an excellent education, resulting in the achievement of the pupils and their personal development, both being outstanding. This is due to the school's outstanding pastoral care, excellent creative curriculum, excellent teaching and outstanding leadership and management. It is a very inclusive school that gives careful and exceptionally effective attention to the needs and interests of all pupils. A very large majority of the parents are highly positive about the school. Typical of their views are, 'The staff are caring, considerate and encouraging, promoting the best from the children' and, 'I'm impressed by Highfield Junior School, its great leadership and its staff'.

From starting points that are above average, the excellent progress pupils make results in their achievement at the end of Year 6 being outstanding. Standards achieved in all areas are consistently exceptionally high. This includes the achievement of vulnerable pupils and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school analyses each pupil's progress very well and is very quick to address any relative underachievement. For example, it recognised the slight fall in the achievement of the highest-attaining pupils in English in 2007. Well-focused intervention, particularly in writing, resulted in an appreciable rise in achievement in 2008.

Pupils are exceedingly polite and courteous. They respond very well to the school's strong focus on manners and respect by interacting very well with one another. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school. One said, 'It's just like home, except you learn.' They are very proud of what they do at school, and take a leading part in many events, such as assemblies. Safeguarding meets Government requirements very well. Pupils feel very safe and secure in the school environment and talk about the school being 'child-friendly' and about the adults 'putting others before themselves'. They understand very well what it means to have a healthy lifestyle, fully justifying the awards for Healthy School and the Activemark accreditation. They also understand very well the benefits of taking on responsibilities, such as 'playground buddies'. They feel that the school listens to them and they are proud of being instrumental in the acquisition of some of the playground equipment, such as football goals. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They report that the behaviour of the vast majority is very good. When asked to describe their school, one pupil said, 'It's a very positive one, but we can always improve.'

Teaching and learning are excellent. Teachers have high expectations and make lessons exceptionally challenging by involving pupils fully in assessing their work and that of their peers. They use questions very effectively to extend pupils' understanding and to make them think for themselves. This active involvement of pupils in their own learning has played a large part in raising standards. Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners because they find lessons so interesting and exciting. One pupil commented, 'We learn best when lessons are interactive, for example we got to argue today.' Pupils know their targets and are guided extremely well, so that they know how well they are achieving and what they have to do to improve their work. This is particularly strong with the pupils in Years 5 and 6, but not so formalised with the younger ones in Years 3 and 4, where teachers do not always guide the pupils to reflect fully on their learning. Pupils greatly enjoy discussing their ideas with each other and assessing how well they have learned their work. This, together with the pupils' excellent skills in literacy, mathematics and their outstanding personal development and well-being, provides a strong basis for pupils' future learning. The excellent curriculum is very creative and is further enriched

by many visiting speakers. The pupils talked most enthusiastically about the extensive range of clubs on offer after school, from gymnastics to dance.

There is no doubt that the leadership and management of the school have played a large part in its success. The highly effective headteacher, very ably supported by a talented leadership team, has instilled a culture of accountability and self-reflection among the staff. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. As a result, the school identifies quickly any areas that are less strong and puts in place very effective strategies to redress this. Subject leaders have played a valuable role in improving achievement by being very involved in monitoring and evaluating. Those staff who are new to the school value greatly the support they receive and say that this has helped them to settle quickly and to become effective in their roles. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for the parents to become involved in their children's learning, such as weekly 'open mornings' where they can view their children's work. Governors are very knowledgeable about the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They are involved fully in evaluating the quality of provision and in holding the school to account for its work. The school's capacity for improvement, based upon its many recent improvements, is outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop the academic guidance for pupils in Years 3 and 4, so that it becomes as good as the excellent guidance provided for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

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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 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/or disabilities make progress	1

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

04 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Junior School, Bromley, BR2 0RL

I really enjoyed my visit to your school. You made me feel very welcome. I enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the interesting work that you do. I was able to see that your school is an excellent one.

Here are some of the things I liked best about your school.

- You are developing excellent personal skills - I particularly liked the way you are very polite and look after each other.
- You know how to stay healthy by eating the right food and by taking plenty of exercise.
- You enjoy your exciting lessons and the many opportunities for clubs after school.
- Your teachers give you very good advice on how to improve your work so you can achieve very well. This is particularly true when you are in Years 5 and 6.
- Adults in school make sure you are safe and very well cared for.
- The leaders and teachers have improved the school very well and are always trying to make it even better.

There is one thing that we have asked the school to improve.

- We would like the teachers in Years 3 and 4 to become even better at helping you to improve your work so that you may achieve even more highly.

You can help by working with your teachers to check how well you are doing and discussing with them the next steps you need to take in your learning.

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me during my visit. I would like to wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector