

Highgate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102092
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	323583
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	401
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Nariman Gandhi
Headteacher	Mr William Dean
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Storey Road North Hill Highgate London N6 4ED
Telephone number	020 8340 7023
Fax number	020 8341 6266

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Highgate is a larger than average primary school. About a third of the pupils come from a White British background. Other pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A well above average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language and around 45 different languages are spoken in the school. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. These difficulties are broad-ranging and include autism and moderate learning, behaviour, speech, language and communication difficulties. The school draws its pupils from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Nursery and Reception. The school shares its site with a special school for deaf children. Pupils from this school are integrated into some of the mainstream lessons at Highgate. A much higher than average proportion of pupils join and leave the school at different times. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Highgate Primary is a good school. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils achieve well in the rest of the school because of effective teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Good care and a positive school climate lead to good personal development and well-being for pupils. Pupils from the special school for the deaf are very well integrated into the school's lessons and activities. In this thriving school, pupils from different backgrounds and cultures are valued and included. As one parent wrote, it is 'a very friendly and inclusive school'.

Parents hold very positive views about the school and most are extremely pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The school's atmosphere, pupils' progress, additional activities and the leadership of the new headteacher receive particular praise. Typical comments from the parents' questionnaires included: 'Lovely community atmosphere', 'Pleased with our child's progress' and 'The new headteacher has exceeded expectations.'

Effective leadership and management successfully promote good provision throughout the school and are resulting in positive outcomes for pupils. The new headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, parents, governors and staff. He brings enthusiasm and a strong educational direction to the school. A parent commented, 'The new headteacher has brought added stimulus and is building on the school's strengths.' The headteacher is supported well by other senior staff. Leadership roles and responsibilities have been effectively distributed. However, some leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to monitor their areas of responsibility. The school demonstrates a good capacity to improve.

Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Standards by the end of Year 2 are broadly average. In the 2008 assessments, girls performed better than boys, particularly in writing. The school has taken positive steps to select topics and materials that appeal to boys. The school recognises that there is scope to extend writing opportunities further to bridge the gap between boys and girls' achievements in writing. The quality of pupils' handwriting varies because there is not a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting. Standards by the end of Year 6 are just above average. The high number of pupils joining and leaving the school at other than the usual times leads to fluctuations in standards. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress.

Good teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils and manage them well. Explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning well in lessons. Assessment is usually used well to match activities and tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. However, this is not always the case and at times tasks are not sufficiently tailored to pupils' needs so that pupils are not always suitably challenged. Occasionally, the overuse of worksheets can impede pupils' opportunities to plan and organise their own work. Teaching assistants are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to learning, particularly for those who need extra help with language, literacy or numeracy.

A good curriculum is enriched by a very good range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and visitors. The school has recently improved information and communication technology (ICT) provision but pupils are not given enough opportunities to apply their skills in a range of subjects.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their enthusiastic participation in activities. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils have a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They are friendly and relate well to others. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well and know how to keep themselves safe. They make good contributions to the school and to the wider community. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children's attainment on entry to the school can vary from year to year. In most year groups, children enter with knowledge and skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Some children enter with limited language skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Good teaching, careful attention to welfare and an interesting range of learning activities enable children to make good progress. Children settle quickly into routines. They make good gains in their personal and social development because of the positive relationships established between adults and children. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and have positive attitudes. Good opportunities are provided for language development because speaking and listening pervade all activities. The teaching of basic reading and early writing skills are given good attention. Teachers and assistants provide an effective blend of adult-led activities and allowing children to explore, be creative and work independently. Some of the indoor furniture and resources are tired or worn and should be replaced. Some of the outdoor learning equipment is also old and tired but there are plans to address this. Outdoor learning activities are not always sufficiently linked to the main themes planned for the children each week. By the end of Reception, standards are above average in most areas of learning. Elements of mathematical development are significantly above average.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the strategies for improving writing, including a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting.
- Ensure that all lessons are suitably challenging and reduce the use of worksheets.
- Increase the use of ICT to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress during their time at Highgate. The high proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school leads to fluctuations in standards, particularly by the end of Year 6. National assessment results for Year 2 pupils in 2008 show that standards were broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage and remain tend to reach higher standards than those who are with the school only for a short time. In the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2008, standards were just above average in English and mathematics. Pupils at an early stage of learning English make good gains in language development because of the well-targeted support they receive. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make good progress because work is well tailored to their needs and they receive effective support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are keen and have positive attitudes to learning. They value and celebrate the rich and diverse cultures that exist in the school. Pupils are courteous and friendly and show considerable respect for others. Attendance is below average but the school is working hard to improve this

and there are signs of improvement. Positive relationships and clear expectations from staff lead to good behaviour. In a good number of lessons seen, behaviour was exemplary. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. They make very good contributions to the school and the wider community. Members of the school council represent their fellow pupils well and have contributed to the improved playground facilities. Pupils support those less well off than themselves by raising funds for well-known national and overseas charities. The choir recently gave a confident and high-quality performance in the local community. Pupils are well prepared for the future. They possess good personal and social skills and make good progress in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers successfully create a positive classroom atmosphere and this gives rise to strong relationships and good learning. Pupils know what they are expected to learn because teachers effectively share the purpose of the lesson with the class at the start. Pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers' clear instructions and explanations. Questioning is used well to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their knowledge and understanding. Activities and tasks are usually well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. When this happens, pupils are suitably challenged and their interest maintained, so they make good gains in their learning. An over-dependence on worksheets in some classes can limit pupils' ability to plan and organise their own work, restrict opportunities for extended writing and sometimes slow pupils' progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who need it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and makes a valuable contribution to their personal development. There are good links between subjects which add meaning and relevance to pupils' learning. For example, English work on biographies in Year 5 was well linked to the work in history about John Lennon. Positive steps are being taken to bridge the gap between the performance of boys and girls in writing, by using topics, such as pirates, superheroes and Robin Hood, to inspire boys to write. Drama and role play are used effectively to create ideas for writing. Other effective strategies are also being explored and this is beginning to bear fruit. The school has identified the need for a more consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting, which is inconsistent across classes.

A very good range of additional activities, including clubs, visits and visitors, contribute to pupils' learning and enjoyment. These are much appreciated by pupils and their parents. The before- and after-school provision successfully meets the needs of working parents. A parent stated, 'After-school provision is strong and varied.' Popular clubs include choir, cricket, French, football, Italian, rugby and yoga. Health and safety education is promoted well across the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good pastoral care and the positive school climate underpin pupils' good personal development. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and safe are effective. Adults have established caring relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils feel very well cared for and safe at school. They are also confident that there is always a trusted grown-up they can turn to if they are upset or have a problem. As a parent commented, 'The school is a safe, creative and happy environment.' There are clear systems to monitor and promote good attendance. The school is implementing other strategies to improve attendance further which include working with parents whose children have low attendance. There are good assessments and effective provision for individual pupils who need additional help with language, literacy, numeracy or social skills. Academic guidance is good, with well-developed systems to assess and monitor pupils' attainment. Pupils are set individual learning targets in literacy, numeracy and science so they know how to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher has made a positive impact on the school community and is effectively building on the school's achievements. He brings considerable experience, a good vision and strong leadership to the school. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and an established leadership team.

Self-evaluation is good. Performance is systematically reviewed and, as a result, the school knows what it does well and what is needed to bring about improvements. Teaching and learning are effectively monitored by senior staff but not all subject leaders have had sufficient opportunities to monitor performance in their areas of responsibility. There are clear plans to address this.

Community cohesion is promoted exceptionally well. Through careful analysis and evaluation, the school has a very good understanding of the rich and diverse community it serves. The challenge of high pupil mobility is tackled well. There are strong partnerships with parents and the other agencies. Family learning programmes, as well as breakfast and after-school provision, are much appreciated by parents. The extremely good partnership with the special school for deaf children benefits the pupils of both organisations. Pupils' understanding of different cultures, faiths and global cohesion are promoted successfully through visits, visitors and a well-planned curriculum.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school's performance and contribute considerably to the school's effectiveness. In particular, the governors have successfully appointed a headteacher with the qualities and skills that meet the needs of this diverse school community.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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
The extent to which 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	1
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 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?	2

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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
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**

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highgate Primary School, London, N6 4ED

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspectors into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we have found. Yours is a good school and one you can be proud of.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and take part in activities with enthusiasm.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start.
- The school is a welcoming and pleasant place to learn in.
- You are making good progress because of the good teaching you receive.
- Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school.
- A good range of learning activities is provided. Additional clubs and visits are very good.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and stay safe.
- The staff take good care of you and give you good support.
- The school offers a very good range of additional activities, including clubs and visits.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and receives good support from other senior staff.
- The school has outstanding partnerships with the community and other organisations.

There are three things the school can work on to make improvements.

- Teachers could extend writing opportunities for you and work together on the teaching of handwriting.
- In a few lessons, teachers could challenge you more and allow you to plan your own work.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) could be used more to support your learning in different subjects and teachers have plans to make this happen.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard and behave well. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector