

Highfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102407
Local Authority	Hillingdon
Inspection number	335895
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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 of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Haley
Headteacher	Jane Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, an officer from the local authority and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents who were present at the start and finish of the school day. They observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 43 parents and 112 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in English and science in Years 3 to 6
- how well the teaching takes account of the needs of groups and individuals, with a particular focus on middle-attaining pupils and those entitled to free school meals
- how consistently well teachers check the progress of different groups of pupils in each year group and how well they inform them about what they need to do to improve their work
- the effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in sustaining improvements in the outcomes for all pupils, and how well community cohesion is embedded.

Information about the school

Highfield is similar in size to other primary schools. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils at the early stages of learning English is similar to that typically found. The proportion eligible for free school meals is above average. There is a below-average percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly related to moderate learning difficulties.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Pupils are right to be proud of their school and relish all it has to offer. Sensitive and watchful pastoral care ensures that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 they are confident, well-rounded young people, ready to play their full part in the world beyond school.

Highfield is moving rapidly in the right direction under the clear direction of its effective headteacher. Very ably supported by the senior team, she inspires staff and pupils to get the best out of themselves and others. There is a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved, coupled with a total absence of complacency. School self-evaluation is accurate. Most importantly, the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey of improvement. This, together with improvements in teaching, the curriculum and a rise in attainment since the last inspection, means the capacity to further improve is good.

There are good systems in place which are used generally well to monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils as they move through the school. This, together with successful interventions, ensures that few pupils fall behind. Although results in national tests dipped in 2008, they are steadily improving over time, including in science, and in mathematics they have risen sharply. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school and their attainment is broadly average. High-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good and often very good progress. Those that attained modestly at Key Stage 1 make slower progress, particularly in English. Some are not completely confident about what they need to do to further improve their work.

A very positive atmosphere permeates the school and relationships are exceptionally strong. Consequently, behaviour is good and pupils have a high regard for both their classmates and for the adults who work with them. The school has worked tirelessly to improve attendance, which is now above average. A very carefully planned, imaginative and varied curriculum inspires pupils to work hard and gain a very wide range of skills. Teachers ensure that pupils are very well motivated, come to school ready to learn and are eager to contribute to lessons. They use questioning in lessons skilfully to promote learning and to analyse and improve pupils' performance. Teachers mark books and set targets for improvement carefully and regularly. As a result, the advice teachers give to pupils about how to improve their work is effective and most pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning. In a minority of lessons, learning is held back because teachers do not always ensure that pupils are given sufficient time to work independently, to learn in an active way and to talk about their findings. Sometimes, tasks set in lessons do not provide maximum challenge, particularly for some

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middle-attaining pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better in the overwhelming majority of lessons by:
 - giving pupils more responsibility for their own learning by encouraging them to be more active and inquisitive in class
 - making sure that there is a sharper match of work to pupils' abilities.
- Increase the rate of progress that middle-attaining pupils make in all years so that it matches that achieved by other groups of pupils by:
 - making sure that at the end of each lesson, these pupils have a clear idea of what they have learnt, whether they have fulfilled their personal objectives and what they need to do to improve them further
 - giving more opportunities for these pupils to develop their writing and comprehension skills.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of good and improving progress, with most pupils confidently working at levels expected for their age. Sustained challenge and high expectations enable pupils, from a below-average baseline and, in the case of language skills, well below, to make good progress in all three core subjects. However, some middle-attaining pupils find higher-level reading and writing skills very difficult. They need considerable time and support to explain orally how they reason, deduce and infer things from texts. In a Year 6 literacy lesson studying *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, although most pupils were well able to describe the appearance of some characters, many middle attainers had great difficulty some of these pupils struggled to explain more abstract aspects of the story. This is a barrier to even more gaining high levels in their work. Detailed plans are in place to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and those identified as gifted and talented, who make good progress.

All teachers confidently carry out termly assessments of pupils' work, enabling them to track pupils' progress accurately. They are becoming very effective in assessing how well pupils make progress in lessons and intervene quickly when any show signs of falling behind. One consequence of this is that pupils entitled to free school meals, whose progress dipped in recent years, now make similar good progress to their peers. Most pupils are very clear about the next steps in their learning, although a minority of middle-attaining pupils are less clear about what they need to do to reach their targets. Pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. In discussions, pupils are clear about how to stay safe and have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They very eagerly take advantage of the many excellent opportunities to participate in the school community, for example, as community officers, who have played a big part

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in helping devise the school's community cohesion plan. A striking feature that the pupils displayed at all times was the caring way they look after each other. In discussions with pupils, the older ones made sure the younger ones had their chance to speak. Pupils develop impressive social and interpersonal skills and relish working collaboratively. This, together with secure and improving standards in the key skills of English and mathematics, means that they are well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching and learning was seen to be good in three quarters of lessons and none were inadequate. Teachers are confident and knowledgeable and create a well-ordered and calm environment. They are good at telling pupils exactly what they are expected to do in lessons and this helps them make sense of their learning. Relationships are happy and harmonious and support the calm and purposeful atmosphere observed by inspectors in all classes. In the lessons where teaching is less effective, learning and progress are held back because teachers do not plan adequately

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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for the range of abilities in the class or build on pupils' prior knowledge. Consequently, a minority of pupils are either not challenged enough or struggle to comprehend. Teachers sometimes talk for too long, which limits the time pupils are actively and independently learning, resulting in slower progress and less time for pupils to articulate what they have learnt.

Pupils achieve well not just because teaching and learning are good, but also because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and 'aim high'.

The curriculum makes an excellent contribution to pupils' good learning and outstanding personal development. The strong focus on mathematics across the curriculum has made a big contribution to the improvements in attainment in this subject. Learning is meaningful because the school carefully plans imaginative themes with strong links between subjects. Through its 'creative learning journey' the school has successfully motivated and enthused pupils and has done much to increase their confidence as learners. Pupils value and appreciate the diversity of their immediate and wider community because there is a strong and pervasive emphasis on celebrating multicultural and cultural aspects in school and beyond. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school has a very caring ethos in which all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, receive good support. Effective partnerships with outside agencies ensure that the needs of these pupils are well met. The school has good procedures in place to monitor and promote good attendance but recognises that there is more for it to do to alter the culture in which some children's education is disrupted by family holidays.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

One reason for the school's success is the drive and ambition of the headteacher, which is shared by all staff and governors. She works tenaciously to improve pupils' educational opportunities and communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff. With strong support from the governing body and senior leaders, she has set a precise path for improvement based on accurate self-evaluation and embedding initiatives, which are making a positive difference to pupils' achievements. Leaders check the school's performance rigorously, offer constructive advice and training, and use their highly effective teachers very well to extend and share good practice. In this way, the

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quality of teaching and learning is rapidly improving.

The governing body fulfils all legal requirements and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff, with all safeguarding arrangements found to be effective at the time of the inspection. It is beginning to hold the school to account well for its work. Leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure that pupils are developing into caring citizens who respect and value the views of others and that a set of common, shared values is embedded in every child. A particular strength is the exemplary way they have involved all members of the school community, particularly pupils, as well as national and international visits and visitors, in their drive to promote very real community cohesion.

A climate has been created where everyone is trying hard to make the school even better. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the many gains of recent years. In this way, the school promotes equality for all pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-planned induction and good links with pre-school settings and parents help children to settle well. Effective teamwork ensures that children's needs are identified quickly, and support is targeted so that they start to make progress straight away. Leaders are fully aware of the strengths and areas they wish to develop. They have created a vibrant, stimulating learning situation both indoors and outside. The good progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that they begin Year 1

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working securely within most of their early learning goals. However, language and mathematical skills remain below the levels expected for many children. Children are helped to learn and develop well because:

- there is a very good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities
- all activities are very well planned, are open ended, exciting and varied
- good planning leads to purposeful play and exploration, both in and outdoors
- adults support, question and support learning well, leading to children being very keen to contribute
- relationships between adults and children are strong, warm and productive.

However, assessments of children's skills on entry to the Nursery have only recently been systematically collated. Teachers have just begun to use this information so that they are able to make accurate checks on the progress of individual children.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents who returned the questionnaire. Almost all respondents felt that: the school keeps their child safe, they are well informed about their child's progress, teaching is good, pupils are well prepared for the future and individual needs are well met.

A number of individual comments reflected the good quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspectors totally agree with these views. A very small minority of parents speak of concerns regarding instances of inappropriate behaviour. There were no incidents of inappropriate behaviour observed by inspectors during the inspection. Behaviour in class and around the school was judged as good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highfield Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 240 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	73	13	25	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	39	75	11	21	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	62	19	37	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	60	20	38	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	65	16	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	67	14	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	29	56	18	35	2	4	1	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	44	26	50	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	54	21	40	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	44	20	38	2	4	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	46	24	46	0	0	3	6
The school is led and managed effectively	32	62	16	31	0	0	2	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	67	15	29	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Primary School, Uxbridge UB10 0DB

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave us when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to so many of you. We were really impressed with how polite and well behaved you are and how much you told us you enjoy school. It is clear that you go to a good school. Here are some of the things we found out that we thought you might like to share.

- Your personal development is outstanding. You behave well around the school and in your classes. You look after each other so well. You relish working in groups and helping each other to learn and you readily help your classmates when they find things difficult.
- You make good progress as you move through the school and your achievement is getting better all the time. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards that are similar to those in most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you well and you also work very hard.
- Your teachers and other adults take good care of you. They make sure that everyone feels safe and secure. They also give you a lot of advice about how you can improve your work.
- Your excellent headteacher, the governors and all your other teachers know exactly how to make sure that your school continues to improve.

There are two things that we have asked the school to work on to help with this.

- It must make sure that those of you who achieved Level 2 at the end of Year 2 make faster progress in Years 3 to 6, especially in English.
- Teachers must ensure that the work they plan for you is neither too easy nor too hard, and gives you opportunities to find things out for yourselves.

I am sure that you will help them by always working hard and aiming really high.

Yours sincerely,

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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