

Highfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132203
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	360396
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2011
Reporting inspector	John Mason

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	487
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Lebeau
Headteacher	Maria Kemal
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. In 20 lesson observations, all 17 teachers present during the inspection were seen. Further short visits were also made to lessons. Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and all staff with key roles of responsibility, and also spoke informally with parents and carers at the start of the school day and at assembly. They observed the school's work, and looked at school development planning, records of the school's monitoring of teaching and learning, records relating to pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings and a range of policies which relate to the safety, care and well-being of pupils. They also considered 120 parental questionnaires submitted.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment and progress of pupils, particularly in writing.
- The extent to which leaders and managers are securing improvement in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum.
- The extent to which pupils' personal development is a strength of the school.

Information about the school

Highfield Primary School is larger than most primary schools. It serves a diverse community from a wide range of different ethnic backgrounds. A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language, and a few are at an early stage in learning to speak English. The school has more children in care than most schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is over twice the national average and the proportion that join or leave school other than at the usual times during the school year is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The current Year 2 comprises three classes. In 2008, the cohort was identified by the local authority as being suited to take in some of the growth in number of pupils of this age. Some pupils are now travelling to school from beyond the usual catchment area.

The school has Activemark and Healthy Schools status and holds the Leading Parent Partnership and International School (Silver) awards. The school runs breakfast and after-school clubs which provide childcare for pupils aged five and above.

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

Highfield Primary School provides a good education. Significant improvements in the quality of teaching and in the curriculum over the past three years, together with well-established systems of care and support, ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning. Pupils enjoy school and are proud of their achievements. Pupils of many different backgrounds mix together well and support one another in their learning and in their play. They feel safe in school at all times. Parents, carers and teachers corroborate this. As one pupil said: 'You get up every day and you know all the teachers are going to care about you, no matter what!'

By the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. There has been a marked trend of improvement since the previous inspection, reflected in higher results in the 2010 national tests, notably in mathematics. However, more-able pupils do not fulfil their full potential. The recent introduction of a stimulating new curriculum which provides pupils with such opportunities as writing longer pieces on a more varied range of topics and to different audiences, is addressing this. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact on attainment. Younger pupils make good links with the English they hear and speak, and spelling is improving well. However, the use of correct grammatical structures in writing is more variable. A lack of confidence in using language in different contexts holds back the most able from reaching the higher levels in science and mathematics, too.

High levels of absence limit some pupils' attainment and the continuity of their learning, despite robust action to counter its impact. This is particularly the case in the current Year 2, which has been markedly affected by pupils entering and leaving the school at different times in the school year. The school rigorously monitors attendance and works successfully with families, carers, and external agencies. Pupils who join the school at times other than the normal time of entry are well integrated and make good progress. Attendance is improving, but remains low.

The school is well led and managed. All staff contribute well to realising a shared vision for excellence. As a result of careful monitoring of provision and well-focused training, teaching is now good and continues to improve. The school has recently introduced a more robust way of tracking the progress of pupils which is already developing teachers' awareness of how to support individuals better. However, it is not used consistently across all subjects. The governing body monitors and evaluates policies and procedures, but does not follow this up with challenging action plans. Its strategies for gaining a more in-depth understanding of how to hold the school to account for the progress of its pupils are too reliant on information provided by the school, although this is improving. Nevertheless, on the basis of improved outcomes and provision since the previous inspection and its accurate understanding of how to improve provision further, the school has good capacity to sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring pupils' attendance reaches the national average by the end of the current school year and sustaining this over time
 - improving the quality of pupils' written English
 - challenging a greater proportion of pupils to attain higher levels in English, mathematics and science by the time they complete Year 6
 - using the new tracking system more effectively to identify how individual pupils can make better progress.
- Ensure that the governing body monitors and evaluates policies and procedures more rigorously, and has a more in-depth understanding of how to hold the school to account for the progress of its pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

When pupils enter Year 1, they do not have the expected literacy or numeracy skills for their age. The progress they make in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory; there are still high levels of mobility in the classes and some pupils have had no formal pre-school education. A well-devised focus on speaking, listening and phonic awareness (linking letters and sounds), however, ensures that pupils develop the core skills to be able to make good progress in Key Stage 2. One parent commented on the skill with which teachers manage the integration of pupils new to the school and describes 'massive' improvement in mathematical and written skills. The well-established focus on improving writing in Key Stage 2 is ensuring that spelling, expression and presentation are improving well, although pupils are only now beginning to have a wider range of contexts and audiences for their writing to be able to aspire more confidently to higher levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL), including those with special education needs and/or difficulties, make good progress.

A particular strength of the school is the extent of pupils' personal development, including how they are encouraged to express their own views. The 'Pupils' Charter' underpins their clear sense of fairness and of responsibility towards one another. As well as making suggestions on how to improve facilities and to engage with the wider community, the very active school council suggests ways to make what and how pupils learn more engaging and relevant. The 'Time Travel' unit in Year 4, a suggestion from pupils, enabled pupils in a presentation in assembly to appreciate the traditions of Chinese New Year as well as the digital future. The warm appreciation shown reflected well the respect pupils show for one another. Pupils' good behaviour ensures that all pupils learn, even when activities in lessons sometimes challenge their concentration.

Pupils enjoy sharing the wealth of cultural experiences they bring to school. One commented: 'One of our golden rules is to respect other cultures.' This fosters a strong sense of respect and tolerance, as well as curiosity for learning. Pupils can speak knowledgeably about different faiths and cultures. When parents and carers give presentations about their experiences, pupils listen with rapt attention, such as during a talk on the Hajj. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, with older pupils supporting younger ones in their play and sports. Well-attended clubs facilitate links with the wider

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community, including visits to local homes for the elderly. The school council, which rotates membership regularly, has benefited from visiting the Houses of Parliament with their Member of Parliament and has been active in a campaign to improve road safety outside the school. Pupils can explain well how to lead a healthy lifestyle and respond well to the school's provision for health-related activities.

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	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching is leading to pupils making good progress. Relationships in lessons are a key strength. Teachers' strong subject knowledge is communicated enthusiastically. Pupils want to learn. Teachers model language very well and good use of different approaches, such as talk partners or reference to success criteria, helps pupils to consolidate and extend their learning. Clear routines for behaviour and learning extend across all lessons. Marking in English and mathematics is good, with clear pointers for what pupils need to do next to improve. Pupils know their targets, but do not discuss these enough with one another to understand them more deeply. Teachers' planning is well informed by the tracking of pupils' progress, but in science is constrained by the lack of moderation of assessments. Teaching assistants are well deployed. Many support all aspects of teaching, not just their specifically allotted pupils. Teachers recognise the need to challenge the most able more and are responding well to plans to bring about higher outcomes for this group.

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All around the school the colourful walls attest to a rich and varied curriculum with much to interest the pupils. Good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship impacts well on pupils' personal development. The curriculum is rich in opportunities for pupils to be creative. The school is already addressing some of the concerns identified for promoting better outcomes for the more able. Information and communication technology (ICT) is well integrated into the mathematics curriculum, but elsewhere the picture is more variable, partly because the school is in the process of changing ICT providers. Pupils respond particularly well to the extensive programme of activities led by visitors, helping them to have a good understanding of the context of where and how they grow up. Many speak positively of the good range of well-attended clubs which meet individual needs well.

All staff know the pupils well. Strong systems for pastoral support ensure pupils know clearly what they must do if an unsafe situation arises. The work with families and a range of agencies to support individual needs is a strength of the school. The school makes a high priority of involving parents and carers into the life of the school. An experienced coordinator oversees a raft of effective support mechanisms for the most vulnerable pupils, including the good use of external agencies, to enable all minority groups and vulnerable pupils to make good progress. The school carefully tracks progress and participation by ethnicity and needs. The breakfast and after-school clubs are well staffed by assistants who know pupils well from school and ensure that purposeful activity takes place. The school plans effectively to ease the transition between the key stages and between primary and secondary education. The school rigorously monitors absence and sends a strong message to parents and carers of the importance of regular attendance. Pupils absent through illness receive work to lessen the impact of absence on learning.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school is well led and managed. A vision to strive for excellence is shared by all staff and morale is high. The re-structuring of the senior and middle management teams has led to a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. A good range of techniques is used to monitor provision, but the manner in which different managers focus on the quality of learning can be variable. Nonetheless, a well-prioritised development plan, based on a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, together with effective professional development for staff and assistants, has led to better learning.

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The governing body's focus on representing stakeholders' views more comprehensively is appropriate, although, at present, a minority of governors have been trained in how to support the agenda for improvement robustly. Plans are now in place to remedy this. The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers and with external partners for pupils' care and well-being is good. The positive action to promote equal opportunity and tackle discrimination is tangible in activities and displays of pupils' work. Safeguarding procedures are good. Statutory requirements are met and the support for the most vulnerable pupils is of high quality. The school is a culturally rich, diverse and inclusive community and school leaders and the governing body have been successful in promoting community cohesion in all major aspects, including putting in place effective measures to evaluate the impact of planned actions.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. All staff are experienced practitioners and have adapted well to the recent change in leadership without any loss of opportunity for the children. Children make good progress from very low starting points in many cases. Skills in literacy and numeracy are well below age-related expectations when children start. Many children have very little experience of hearing and speaking English at home. The setting recognises this well and ensures that speaking and listening tasks are well linked with early phonics (linking letters and sounds) to enable the children to communicate much better and to understand the importance of letters and sounds. Children mix well and make good progress in their social development. Staff make careful assessments of children's progress and liaise very well with home to ensure parents and carers can provide further support. Assessment information is also well used to inform planning. In a Nursery class, for example, staff focused on shape, space and measures because they had identified a weakness in children's knowledge. A

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stimulating environment provides good opportunities for the children to initiate their own activities, as well as join in those led by adults. Children can move freely between indoor and outdoor activities. However, in some classes, the outside areas are all hard surfaces and climbing apparatus is unevenly distributed. There is a high level of care for vulnerable pupils, including those with EAL. Assessment records are well moderated for accuracy and point to a rising trend in attainment over the last three years, though children still do not have the skills expected for their age when they enter Year 1.

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

Parents and carers express a good degree of satisfaction with the education their children receive. They feel overwhelmingly that their children are safe and enjoy school. Most consider teaching to be good and feel well informed about the progress their children are making. In Reception, 'daily informal face-to-face feedback and the weekly written feedback helps us, as parents, to support our daughter's learning', noted one parent. The few critical comments from parents and carers are varied, with no clear pattern of concern emerging.

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 120 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 487 pupils registered at the school, a broadly average response rate for primary schools.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	58	49	41	1	1	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	57	48	61	51	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	48	40	63	53	8	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	40	55	46	11	9	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	50	42	64	53	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	48	40	61	51	7	6	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	31	69	58	6	5	2	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)	35	29	64	53	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	33	62	52	8	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	37	60	50	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	27	74	62	8	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	36	67	56	5	4	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	43	60	50	6	5	1	1

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Primary School, London N21 3HE

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when the team of inspectors visited your school recently. We were very impressed by the way you talked so positively about the school. Please also pass on our thanks to the parents and carers we met and to those who returned the completed questionnaires.

We agree with Mrs Kemal and her staff that Highfield is a good school. You make good progress to reach average standards in your work by the end of Year 6. Since the school was last inspected it has got much better. It has long been a very caring school, but now teaching is good and you find learning more interesting. As a result, you make good progress in your learning.

We were also particularly pleased to see how responsible you are around school and how you respect one another. The 'Pupils' Charter' and the engagement of the school council help spread the word about how important this is. Little wonder that you and your parents and carers said how very safe you feel at school!

We found that Mrs Kemal and her team lead the school well. Like them, we would like to see the school improve further so that you reach higher standards in your work. We have asked your teachers to address the following areas to help you do even better.

- Improve attendance so that more pupils benefit from learning without interruption.
- Help you to improve the quality of your written English.
- Aim for more pupils to gain higher levels in tests and assessments in English, mathematics and science.
- Use the new tracking system more effectively to identify how individual pupils can progress more rapidly.

We have also asked the governing body to help by taking a more active role in supporting the school and asking more questions to check that the school keeps its focus on improving your learning. You can help too by continuing to try your best in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

John Mason

Lead inspector

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