

Highfield Primary School

Highfield Road, Enfield N21 3HE

Inspection dates

27–28 April 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The impact of the headteacher’s vision, drive and exceptional leadership has ensured the school has gone from strength to strength.
- From the mini-farm to the rich, vibrant and thought-provoking displays of work throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to be curious about the world.
- Senior and middle leaders know the school extremely well. They know what improvement to make and take prompt and effective action.
- Pupils in the early years settle promptly. They make significant progress from very low starting points and by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 their progress, which has accelerated year on year, leads to their attainment becoming well above average in English and mathematics.
- The vast majority of parents cannot praise the school highly enough for its work.
- The school’s safeguarding arrangements are effective. All staff and leaders, including governors, are able to carry out their duty of care in keeping children safe.
- A significant number of pupils of different ages, from different countries and backgrounds; often at the early stages of speaking English, start school at different points in the year. They are warmly welcomed and make rapid progress.
- Teachers know their pupils well. They use this knowledge to good effect, ensuring pupils make rapid and sustained progress.
- The curriculum is a strength of the school. Each subject is brought to life through innovative, creative and practical approaches which challenge and spark pupils’ interest.
- Pupils’ behaviour is impeccable. They look after each other, are inquisitive about learning and have a deep understanding of fairness and tolerance towards people who have different backgrounds and beliefs.
- The governing body have made significant improvements since the last inspection. Leaders are questioned closely about pupil progress and the quality of teaching.
- Early years provision is outstanding. The exciting, stimulating and nurturing environments, both inside and outside, are well planned, ensuring pupils develop an early love of learning.
- Leaders are well aware that there are still a few groups of pupils whose progress is not as fast as that of their peers. Inspectors agreed with this issue as the school’s area for improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Establish a consistent approach to narrowing the gaps in the rates of progress for all groups of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher's passion for ensuring all pupils receive an outstanding education is tangible in all aspects of the school's work. Alongside her energetic and enthusiastic senior leadership team, she has created a colourful and enticing learning environment where pupils are happy, feel safe and love to learn.
- All leaders are knowledgeable about what the school does well and what the challenges are in maintaining the exceptionally high quality of teaching. All leaders work alongside staff on a formal and informal basis to check how much progress pupils are making.
- Pupils' progress is tracked relentlessly and potential underperformance is identified swiftly. Regular monitoring meetings between leaders and teachers ensure that pupils are provided with the appropriate support to ensure their progress does not stall. This close scrutiny of information has helped leaders identify that a few pupils are not making the consistently good or better progress that their peers make. The senior leadership team have narrowed the issue down to those pupils who start at different times in the school year and who are at the early stages of speaking English in the early years and key stage 1.
- The curriculum is extremely well designed to meet the needs of pupils, whose ideas regularly supplement the planning. Subject leaders work together to design termly 'projects' which link different subjects together. A recent project about London provided pupils with a knowledge and understanding of the city in which they live. Visits to different places of interest such as HMS *Belfast* supported the history strand about the Second World War.
- A notable feature of the curriculum can be seen in how the school uses the outside environment. The 'mini-farm' with pigs and goats and the wildlife area are used to help children understand nature and how to care for other living things. The school has appointed a poet in residence, whose work has enabled pupils whose first language is not English to develop their creative writing and speaking skills. One of these pupils went on to win a national competition with a moving and reflective poem about love and death, which she translated from the original language.
- The most-able pupils are challenged to think and work creatively. Examples include work using the London Tube map to develop telling the time and using timetables.
- The leadership of the school's work in teaching pupils who have special educational needs or disability is exemplary. Pupils from different year groups who have been identified as autistic are brought together and provided with daily sessions in a small group to practise their language and social skills before returning to their classes. This approach has helped the pupils make good progress both academically and socially.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is at the core of the curriculum, which is based around a set of 'values' explored in depth each term. Inspectors saw powerful and convincing evidence of how pupils understood the concept of 'courage'. Pupils are encouraged to look for the value in their everyday lives and tell the staff and headteacher when they have identified it.
- The use of pupil premium funding is highly effective. Precise identification and tracking of progress is used for all pupils. This information supports the school in providing the right type of support at the right time. The school's analysis and published assessment information demonstrates clearly that the gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers from their starting points in the Nursery are being closed by the time they reach the end of Year 2.
- Funding for sports and physical education is used to impressive effect. A high proportion of pupils from different backgrounds are able to choose from a large number of well-attended lunchtime and after-school clubs including boxing, gymnastics and cricket.
- The headteacher and other school leaders work productively and successfully within a local partnership of schools. Individual schools beyond Enfield have also benefited from the school's influence. The school's work has helped some of these schools improve and receive positive inspection results.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved since the previous inspection.
 - has an in-depth understanding of the challenges facing the school and is able to hold leaders to account effectively.
 - uses performance management effectively.
 - ensures regular visits to the school are undertaken to understand its work.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- The teaching staff are highly motivated and skilled. Skilled and well-trained teaching assistants provide additional high-quality support. Planning and accurate use of assessment information ensures that pupils make outstanding progress, often from very low starting points.
- Phonics lessons in the early years and key stage 1 are skilfully taught. The result is confident pupils who are able to attempt words and sounds which are challenging, and often to a higher standard than expected for their age.
- Pupils' reading is confident and fluent. Books and other sources of text are often part of displays.
- Every classroom is exciting, stimulating and purposeful. The colourful and high-quality displays reflect pupils' work, asking them challenging questions and providing information to help them with spellings, grammar and mathematical calculations.
- Pupils of all ages confidently talk about their 'next steps' in learning. They are enthusiastic about what they have learned and how much they enjoy coming to school. One pupil told an inspector, 'I like English because it means I can go wild with my imagination.'
- The significant majority of parents who responded to the online questionnaire or spoke to inspectors were very happy with their children's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. New arrivals from different countries are warmly welcomed. Pupils told inspectors about the 'buddy systems' in place to help them settle in. One pupil told an inspector, 'I could have been lonely when I started but I was looked after and helped to make friends.'
- Many pupils told inspectors that they felt extremely safe in the school and that the staff were caring and helpful.
- Pupils were able to tell inspectors how they kept safe when online and what they would do if they discovered anything uncomfortable.
- The parental questionnaire, discussions with pupils and the school's records show that incidents of bullying are very rare and dealt with promptly.
- Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to develop their self-awareness and understanding of their rights and responsibilities through the school's creative use of the Unicef Children's Charter.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility through such roles as school councillors, mentors and 'tour guides'.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, and other vulnerable pupils, are very well provided for by the careful and thoughtful coordination of professional agencies including the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), educational psychologists and speech therapists.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are thoughtful and caring towards each other and adults. The curriculum offers pupils many opportunities to practise being reflective and to become deeply involved in learning.
- In lessons, pupils are able to become absorbed in their work promptly and hold their concentration for long periods of time.
- Parents and staff who responded to the online questionnaires agree that pupils' behaviour is outstanding.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and the numbers of pupils who are late are very low. When inspectors were at the school gates at the start of the inspection, they saw pupils keenly waiting to come in long before school opened.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Pupils make rapid progress in almost every year group. The school identified that progress was slower in the early years and key stage 1. Over the last two years, time and energy has been spent on increasing levels of attainment and accelerating progress in reading, writing and mathematics to a noteworthy effect.
- Gaps between those learners who are disadvantaged and others have closed and in some cases disadvantaged pupils have surpassed their peers. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is well above average. The key stage 2 results for 2015 were so impressive that the school received a letter of congratulation from the Minister of State for Schools on being amongst the top 100 schools in the country for progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make excellent progress. The strong and well-informed leadership of the special educational needs coordinator ensures that all staff are trained to understand the different needs of pupils. She has effectively marshalled the support agencies to work alongside the school to make sure each pupil receives the appropriate guidance and help.
- The most-able pupils make outstanding progress because of the challenge and variety of the work they are provided with. Teachers and leaders use assessment information well to make sure there is continuous challenge. One pupil was able to explain to an inspector about how the 'next steps' in his maths book provided him with the information to know how to improve.
- Pupils make excellent progress in many subjects. Work seen in books and displays is of a high quality and standard. Art, history and personal, social, health and economic education are a few of the subjects which stand out. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 have the opportunity to learn French. There are regularly planned themed weeks for different subjects.
- Year 6 pupils are well prepared for their move to secondary education. Staff, including the headteacher, have established strong working relationships with the local secondary schools. This work includes a range of visits and taster sessions in the secondary schools and visits to Highfield by secondary staff.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Due to the excellent leadership and management of the early years, the Nursery and Reception classes are a hive of activity focused on fun and learning. The youngest pupils have an excellent start to their school life. The school makes significant efforts to smooth pupils' way into school, including home visits, parents' days and frequent formal and informal communication with parents.
- Staff make the learning environments enticing and plan challenging activities to stretch and interest all the pupils, whatever their levels of learning. The outside learning environment is used to promote literacy and numeracy skills through a whole range of play and formal activities.
- From an early age, behaviour is excellent. Pupils work together calmly and in a very friendly manner. Their levels of concentration are far beyond those normally seen for children of this age.
- By the time pupils leave Reception, they are more than ready for the key stage 1 curriculum, with levels of development often higher than those seen nationally.
- Staff are able to assess pupils' needs skilfully and accurately. High-quality plans support what pupils should do next. The immaculate learning journals have a range of information about each individual child's development which is regularly shared with parents.
- The teaching of phonics is one of many strengths. Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and well managed. Inspectors observed pupils making sentences and responding with clarity to adults' questions. The rates of progress through the early years are rapid from very low starting points.
- Pupils whose first language is not English are well supported, with adults intervening to help them spell and speak with confidence and fluency.

School details

Unique reference number	132203
Local authority	Enfield
Inspection number	10010966

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	572
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diana Wren
Headteacher	Maria Kemal
Telephone number	020 8360 2149
Website	http://www.highfieldprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@highfield-pri.enfield.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 February 2011

Information about this school

- Highfield Primary School is larger than most primary schools.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The number of children looked after is higher than in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average.
- The numbers of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the usual times is higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average.
- Since the last inspection, the school has increased in size and a new building for the early years, key stage 1 and visitor reception has been completed and opened.
- The school meets the current government floor standards.
- The content of the school's website meets government requirements.
- The school runs breakfast, lunchtime and after-school clubs for pupils aged five and above.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was converted from a short inspection to a full section 5 inspection.
- Inspectors carried out a series of short visits to classrooms and longer lesson observations in each year group.
- Formal and informal discussions took place with senior leaders, including governors, subject leaders, parents, pupils and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised documentation regarding the school's website and safeguarding, including the single central register.
- Other documents that were read included the school's self-evaluation, plans for improvement and the pupils' assessment information.
- Pupils' work in different subjects was analysed.
- Pupils' behaviour before, during and in between lessons was observed by inspectors.
- Inspectors took into account the 107 responses to the online questionnaire, 'Parent View', and the 45 staff responses.
- Inspectors listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

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Brian Oppenheim	Her Majesty's Inspector
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