



Highters Heath Nursery School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103134
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276853
Inspection dates 27 June 2006 to 27 June 2006
Reporting inspector Hazel Callaghan AI

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

Type of school	Nursery	School address	11 School Road
School category	Community		Warstock
Age range of pupils	3 to 4		Birmingham, West Midlands B14 4BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4742356
Number on roll	51	Fax number	0121 474 2356
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Liz Edwards
Date of previous inspection	8 May 2000	Headteacher	Miss Debbie Bateman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors

Description of the school

Highters Heath is an average-sized Nursery school. Most children attend the Nursery for the whole day. Seven children attend either in the morning or the afternoon only. The majority of children are of White British background. A few children are from minority ethnic groups and a small number are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. When they start at the Nursery, many have not gained the range of experiences and skills usually seen in children of this age and a significant proportion have learning difficulties or disabilities. Attainment on entry overall is below average. A new headteacher took up post after Easter. During the previous two terms, the school had been led by two acting headteachers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Highters Heath Nursery provides a satisfactory education for its children but has many strengths: a view shared by the school. Very good relationships underpin children's good personal development and the school's effective provision for their care, support and guidance. Standards and achievement are satisfactory in language and mathematical development but better in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. The provision for children with learning difficulties or disabilities is good and they consequently achieve well. Teaching is satisfactory. All staff promote a stimulating curriculum that motivates children's outstanding attitudes and motivation to learn. Procedures for assessing children's learning are incomplete and teachers do not have a secure picture of children's standards and progress. Targets for children's next stage in learning are not sufficiently linked to children's abilities and this slows their progress because expectations are not always high enough. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strong leadership of the new headteacher is already having a positive impact on many areas of school development but other managers and the governors are not yet sufficiently secure about how to carry out their roles and responsibilities. The accuracy of the school's evaluations of its effectiveness are now satisfactory, based on the headteacher's recent monitoring and analysis of new assessment data. Links with outside agencies are strong and the school's partnership with parents is effective. Improvement since the previous inspection is satisfactory but it is now moving quickly, demonstrating that the capacity for further improvement is good. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's progress in developing their language and mathematical skills by systematically developing their knowledge and skills and setting more challenging targets for their future learning.
- Develop more comprehensive and useful systems for assessing children's work so their progress can be monitored and data analysed to evaluate the quality of learning.
- Develop managers' and governors' expertise and knowledge so that leadership and management at all levels are more effective.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall, with strengths in several areas of the curriculum. Children start school with a range of abilities but overall their skills and knowledge are below those expected for children of this age. Children make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and this prepares them well for other learning. Children also progress well in their understanding of the world and their creative development. This is the result of a stimulating curriculum that promotes their curiosity and interest. Children's progress in their language and mathematical development is satisfactory but standards remain below those expected when children transfer into the Reception class. Progress in the development of early reading and

writing skills is satisfactory rather than good because teachers have not sufficiently focused on systematically extending children's knowledge and skills. More able children are capable of good achievement but their progress is only satisfactory. This problem is being addressed by the recent introduction of special teaching groups for these children. Children's ability to solve mathematical problems has also been less well promoted in the past but a positive focus on promoting boys' better understanding has started to improve standards. The school has recently introduced targets for all children's progress but this is still a new process and does not sufficiently take the children's abilities into account. The staff are skilled in supporting children with learning difficulties or disabilities and a number of very positive strategies are used to meet children's needs. These children consequently make good progress towards the targets set for them. Children in the early stages of learning English as an additional language are equally well supported but strategies to support their learning are not as well developed and they make satisfactory progress overall.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. They behave well because of the high expectations shown by all adults and the very good relationships through the school. Children enjoy school and attend regularly. They show care and consideration for each other. Several children were seen helping one another to cut up their sausages at lunchtime, for example. They usually share toys and resources because they understand how to be fair, and what is not fair. Children are developing good levels of independence, and their attitudes to work are excellent. They listen to instructions and work by themselves confidently or with other children, often showing very good levels of concentration. Children make a good contribution to the life of the school. They follow school routines sensibly, taking responsibility for tidying up after themselves. Children confidently make suggestions about how to make things better in the school and they have set many of the class rules. They recognise the importance of eating fruit and drinking water to keep healthy. They understand how to keep safe and are careful when using a range of tools and equipment. They are developing an important range of skills, such as initiative, cooperation and perseverance that will help them in their future education and the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall. Staff make learning fun and so the children want to do well. The strong focus on promoting children's personal, social and emotional development underpins all activities and in this aspect, teaching is good. The teaching of language skills and mathematics is satisfactory. Expectations for children's progress, however, are not always high enough because assessment procedures are incomplete

and teachers do not have a secure picture of children's standards and progress. Targets for children's next stage in learning are not sufficiently linked to children's abilities and so progress is satisfactory rather than good. Teaching of children with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. The focused teaching and support given by the special educational needs teaching assistant is particularly strong and the next stage of their learning is effectively planned.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and there is a good number of additional activities that enrich children's learning, such as local visits, an artist in residence and regular visits from a local musician. There is a good balance of teacher-led activities and exciting range of tasks for children to explore as part of their independent play. The accommodation is attractive with good quality resources that stimulate children's interest and curiosity. The outdoor environment has been recently developed and now makes excellent use of all the space available. This 'outside classroom' is well utilised to develop a wide range of skills. Curricular planning has been recently evaluated and planning of daily activities has improved so that there is a clear focus on what children are to learn. The use of teaching groups has worked well to adapt the curriculum to the needs of vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities. Extension activities for more able children have only recently been introduced and the needs of these children are now satisfactorily met. Staff are also developing satisfactory strategies for adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of children in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The importance of healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe are promoted well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Pastoral care for all children is good and their personal needs are successfully met. The sensitive induction of children into the school enables them to settle quickly and, as a result, children get off to a good start. Child protection arrangements are effective and children's health and safety are well monitored. The school is a very secure area and parents are confident that their children are safe and well cared for. Two parents wrote, 'Children love coming to school' and, 'I have never had any worries when my child is at school'. There are consistent and effective strategies for supporting children's personal development and teachers accurately identify the areas of children's development that need greater support. Academic support and guidance are satisfactory overall. The care and guidance of vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties or disabilities is good. The use of sign language to support children's communication skills and the school's close links with parents are just two of the successful strategies used to promote children's learning. Children's academic progress is regularly assessed but not sufficiently collated and monitored so that their progress is tracked and weaknesses clearly identified. This

slows the progress children make in communication, language and literacy and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school has been through a period of uncertainty but is now moving forward under the purposeful leadership of the new headteacher. Through her monitoring, she has formed a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what is needed for improvement. A very positive start has already been made, for example, to improving curricular planning, the initiation of group teaching for more able children and the analysis of assessment data so that children's progress can be evaluated. The headteacher has also successfully energised staff, parents and children to remodel the area around the Nursery so that all available space has become an exciting and stimulating area in which children can work and play. Management responsibilities have been satisfactorily shared across the staff but management skills have not yet been sufficiently developed. Systems for assessing pupils' progress are in place, but there has been insufficient analysis of the data in the past to provide an accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. The governing body is still fairly new. It has been successful in appointing an effective headteacher but the governors are still developing their own roles and responsibilities. The school has very positive partnership with parents and their views are regularly sought as part of the school's evaluation process. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the previous inspection but this process is now moving more rapidly. Staff have shown the ability to adapt to new ideas and willingness to participate in additional professional training. Their very positive response to new leadership, which is already successfully improving the management of the school, is evidence of the school's capacity for further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

27 June 2006 Dear Children I am writing to say thank you for making us feel welcome in your school and for helping us with our questions. We really enjoyed chatting to you and found everything you said very interesting. I thought you would like to know what we found out about your school. What we liked about the school

- You are happy and enjoy what you do because the staff make learning fun.
- You get on well with each other and with the adults in the school and most of you behave very sensibly and are kind to each other.
- You try very hard to do well in your work.
- You understand how important it is to keep safe and to eat things that are good for you.
- You are given jobs to do and you try to do them well.
- All the grown ups look after you very well and help you feel safe.
- The school works very closely with your families.
- Your headteacher and the staff want to do all they can to make the school even better.

What we have asked the school to do

- We have asked the teachers to help you make good progress in your early reading and writing skills and to become even better at doing number problems.
- We have asked your teachers to check how well you are doing so they can help you do the very best you can.
- We have asked your headteacher to help all the people who work in the school and the governors to understand how to make your Nursery one of the very best.

Thank you again for being so kind to us. Yours sincerely Hazel Callaghan (Lead inspector) Alexandra House 33 Kingsway London WC2B 6SE T 0207 421 6800 F 0207 421 6707 www.ofsted.gov.uk