

Highbury School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107591
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	309440
Inspection date	28 September 2007
Reporting inspector	Noreen Buckingham

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	50
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Beryl Fishwick
Headteacher	Miss Pam Sellers
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2005
School address	Lower Edge Road Rastrick Brighouse West Yorkshire HD6 3LD
Telephone number	01484 716319
Fax number	01484 721893

Age group	2-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Highbury School admits children and pupils aged between 2 and 11 years who have a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities, such as complex difficulties, severe or moderate learning difficulties and an increasing number with autistic spectrum disorder. Since the last inspection the school roll has increased and 49 pupils now attend the school. All pupils except two have statements of special educational need. Fourteen pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and seven are at the early stages of learning English.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Highbury School is a good school, which gives its pupils a good all-round education. This is due to the good leadership of the headteacher and her team who are totally committed to giving the pupils the best experiences they can. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the strong commitment of all staff means that the capacity to improve is good. Parents are unanimous in their support of the school and those who attended a coffee morning had nothing but praise for the staff and what they do for their children. The school gives good value for money.

Young children in the Foundation Stage settle well and are given an outstanding introduction to school. They make extremely good progress mainly due to the excellent teaching and high level of very skilled support they are given from the moment they start. Pupils throughout the school enthusiastically join in the activities both in and out of the classroom. Teaching is good and as a result, pupils are making good strides in their learning. Whilst the most able pupils make more rapid progress, all achieve well. Because of the pupils' learning difficulties and/or disabilities their achievements are measured in small steps. Staff do not yet take sufficient opportunities to check and share their assessments to ensure greater accuracy of the developing assessment systems. All staff try very hard to develop and extend pupils' communication skills, sometimes by the use of Alternative Augmented Communication systems. Planning shows that individual needs are known and understood so that activities and support generally match pupils' abilities well. Teamwork in the classrooms means that pupils are given a good level of individual support enabling them to sustain good levels of progress. Pupils' attendance and behaviour are good and they like coming to school. They show great enjoyment in the activities within the curriculum, which emphasise developing communication skills as well as their personal, social and health skills. This, alongside the very positive relationships across the school and the high levels of care, leads to pupils' outstanding personal development. Their behaviour is good and they have many opportunities to develop their social skills, such as lunchtimes when pupils can make choices and learn daily living skills. Leadership and management of the school are good, although the leadership team just involves the headteacher and deputy headteacher. As a result, other members of staff do not have enough opportunities to develop their skills and take greater ownership of the decision-making process. Governors are very supportive and have monthly meetings. Some governors make regular visits to monitor their individual responsibilities. However, these visits are not always sufficiently focused or formally recorded to ensure that all governors gain a better understanding of overall school effectiveness.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage offers children an outstanding start to their education. Experienced staff work very well together enabling children to achieve and make excellent progress. Parents feel very welcome and say that their children are very happy and extremely well cared for, making good progress right from the start. Sessions are planned in detail allowing for every child's needs. A baseline assessment shortly after admission enables staff to set appropriate targets for pupils' individual education plans which are monitored regularly ensuring very effective progress. Improvements are noted so that children can be moved on. Relationships within the Foundation Stage are very positive producing a welcoming and happy atmosphere in which children thrive and feel safe and secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the senior management team to include other members of staff.
- Continue to develop assessment procedures, including moderation systems to ensure greater accuracy.
- Formalise governor visits so that all governors are better informed about the overall effectiveness of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Analysis of assessment data shows that boys and girls, pupils with differing difficulties and those from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve equally well. The wide range and complexity of pupils' needs mean that their progress must be measured in very small steps. However, by the end of Key Stage 2, some pupils are beginning to work within the early levels outlined in the National Curriculum for all pupils. Pupils make good progress in their communication skills and personal development and are prepared to move on to the next stage of their education with confidence. Good teaching contributes to the good achievement and following analysis of assessment information, individual and whole-school targets are set to help promote progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Children and pupils are extremely happy and they really enjoy coming to school. This reflects the enjoyable range of learning experiences they are offered and results in good attendance. The school is working towards gaining the Healthy Schools Award and this, coupled with a good range of physical activities and a good personal, health and social curriculum, means that pupils are well aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Because of the very positive relationships across the school, pupils feel completely safe and know they can go to any adult if they have a problem. They are developing a strong awareness of the local community and daily living skills through their fund-raising activities and visits to local facilities. Their very good behaviour and work is rewarded in assemblies and they gain good awareness of other faiths and cultures when celebrating a wide range of religious festivals.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers generally plan with pupils' individual needs in mind using resources that are matched to the topic as well as pupils' levels of understanding. However, there is the odd occasion when pupils with the most complex learning difficulties are not fully involved and resources do not stimulate a response. Relationships within the classroom are very positive and contribute strongly to the good progress pupils make. Classrooms are bright, lively places and pupils are encouraged to actively participate in all activities to the best of their ability. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress and they work very closely with teachers to support pupils' learning. Work is marked and pupils' responses

are recorded. These are assessed against fine scales, although there is some inconsistency within the judgements because assessments across the school are not shared and checked enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and mostly meets pupils' individual needs well. Good attention is given to developing communication and numeracy skills, along with a strong emphasis on personal, health and social skills which have a positive impact on pupils' personal development. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits to places of interest, focusing on sport, the arts and the environment. It is further supported by visitors who come into school demonstrating special skills. Good links are in place with other schools, especially the secondary schools pupils move on to, making transition arrangements easier.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are given a very high level of care and support. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including child protection and risk assessments, are secure.

The school is very aware of current health issues and ensures that hygiene systems across the school are understood and practiced by everybody involved with the pupils. A wide range of external agencies works with the school to support pupils' specific needs. Staff know pupils very well and understand their needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive and pupils are treated with respect and dignity. Risk assessments are very thorough and all staff have up-to-date training. Whilst some pupils will need support from an adult, the planned introduction of a school council will improve pupils' self-confidence and advocacy skills giving them opportunities to voice their opinions first hand. Accurate systems to track pupils' progress are developing.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The core leadership team of the headteacher and her deputy headteacher drive the school forward. They lead a staff who are willing to go that extra mile for the pupils, which contributes to the very positive ethos in the school. All staff are committed to giving the pupils the very best they can so that they can achieve well and make good progress. However, the involvement of other staff in the leadership and management of the school is limited. This restricts both their understanding of the work of the school and their opportunities to develop and extend their expertise. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of what the school gives their children and have nothing negative to say. Targets for raising achievement are in place following analysis of data and subject leaders are becoming more active in monitoring their subjects. The governors are similarly committed and frequently visit the school, willingly giving their time. However, visits are not always sufficiently focused or formally recorded to extend all governors' knowledge and understanding of the school's effectiveness.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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 the 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

¹ Grade 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.

Annex A

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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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	3
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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Highbury School, Lower Edge Road, Rastrick, Brighouse, West Yorkshire, HD6 3LD

I did enjoy my visit to your school, even though it was only for a day, and I think you have a lovely school. I know you all enjoy the activities you are offered because your attendance is good and you are growing up so well. I enjoyed talking with some of you, particularly when you invited me to sit beside you for lunch. You all looked after me very well. I was also able to talk with some of your mums at the coffee morning and they think Highbury is a good school and are really pleased at how well everybody looks after you. It was good to see the very youngest children enjoying themselves. They may not have realised they were learning from the very minute they start school, but I could see the outstanding teaching and care they were given. They have the very best start to school. I could see how much you all enjoy your lessons too, and I was particularly interested to see how some of you were recycling materials to make clothes! Teachers try very hard to make lessons interesting for you so that you can make good progress. They keep track of how well you are doing but I have asked them to share and check their records more carefully.

All the adults in school take very good care of you and they all work very hard. I have suggested that more teachers could be involved in managing the work of the school. School governors come and visit to see what is happening and I think it would be a good idea if they write down what they see and share it with the rest of the governors.

I hope the staff will tell you how much I enjoyed my visit and that you will continue to enjoy your school.