

# Highfield Junior and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103215
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	336033
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	831
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr T Alam
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms R Kundi
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Highfield Road Saltley Birmingham
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They visited 28 lessons, and held meetings with the headteacher and senior staff, representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils and a small number of parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation including the tracking of pupils' progress, the school improvement plan and samples of the monitoring of the work of the school. Inspectors scrutinised questionnaires received from 101 parents, 142 from pupils and 49 from staff.

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

- whether all groups of pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2 make enough progress especially in English
- if the personal development of pupils is good and whether they are cared for, supported and guided well
- whether staff make full use of assessment information to provide interesting and challenging lessons for pupils of all abilities
- if the monitoring of the work of the school is rigorously evaluative and identifies areas for further improvement.

## Information about the school

This is an extremely large primary school in a socially deprived area of inner-city Birmingham. The very large majority of pupils are of Asian heritage and many are initially at the early stages of learning English. More than twice the number of pupils than seen nationally is eligible for free school meals. There is also double the usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities including a wide range of additional needs. The school holds a Health Promoting School Award and Investors in People status. The headteacher took up her role earlier this term.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a school that provides a satisfactory quality of education. It is a happy school that children like coming to and they say that there is little they would change. Parents are generally pleased with what is provided for their children and several echoed the thoughts of one who stated, 'I am very happy with my child's progress, the teachers are very helpful and my child is excited about learning more'. There is little bullying and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and how to lead a healthy lifestyle.

Children enter the Reception classes with skills that are well below the expectations for their age particularly in communicating with others. Many are initially very quiet and lack belief in their own abilities. All groups of pupils gain in confidence and make satisfactory, but sometimes inconsistent progress as they move through the school. When they leave at the age of 11 standards are well below national averages, particularly in English. Too few pupils reach the levels expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing and very few reach the higher levels. This affects their learning in all other areas. Standards in mathematics, science and other subjects are slightly better than in English but still below average.

Teachers manage the pupils well so that lessons are conducted in a calm and purposeful manner. However, the planning of activities is very variable and staff do not make good enough use of assessment information to provide interesting and challenging activities for all groups of pupils. In some classes there is too much use of worksheets that limit the development of writing skills and classroom assistants are not always deployed to best effect. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas, carry out research or solve problems for themselves. The care, guidance and support of pupils is satisfactory with pastoral care often good. The school is working very hard to address the poor attendance of a minority of pupils but improvement is hindered by the high number of persistent absentees.

The new headteacher has made a very effective start by clearly identifying the exact strengths and weaknesses in provision and what needs to be done to address such issues. Together with the support of the deputy headteacher, governors and staff plus new initiatives which are improving consistency across the school, this is now ensuring the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise the attainment of pupils of all ages and abilities especially in English by ensuring they make consistently good progress as they move through the school.
  - Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
    - using assessment information to ensure all pupils are provided with a sufficiently high level of challenge that is appropriate to their abilities
    - using effective planning formats that clearly identify what each group of pupils is to learn
    - limiting the use of worksheets in order to extend pupils' writing skills
    - ensuring that all teaching assistants are used productively to support pupils learning
    - ensuring pupils are provided with guidance on how to improve their work.
  - Extend pupils confidence and independence in their learning by increasing their opportunities to make choices in what they do, discuss their ideas and carry out problem-solving activities.
  - Improve the attendance of pupils who are persistent absentees by working very closely with their families to stress the importance of regular attendance.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Initially many pupils are at the early stages of learning English but even those with bilingual skills often lack self-confidence. Many are very passive learners who watch others but often do not offer their ideas. Inspectors noted in lesson observations and through the scrutiny of recent work that whilst most pupils make generally satisfactory progress, and for some it is good, attainment varies from class to class and year to year. Planning and teaching are inconsistent. In Years 2 and 6 pupils from all backgrounds and of all abilities have skills in English that are well below average. Too few pupils speak with a wide and descriptive vocabulary, read with technical skill and expression, or write in any great depth. Skills in mathematics and science are slightly better because pupils often master basic computation and are interested in scientific facts. Standards in information and communication technology are affected by the low number of computers. While boys and girls generally do equally well in national tests, as girls get older they often become quieter in lessons. While many pupils grow in confidence and some make good progress, the development of skills to help them prepare for the future is no better than satisfactory.

Pupils listen attentively and many concentrate well because they are keen to please, as shown in their generally neatly presented work. Behaviour in the classroom and playground is good because there are clear school and class rules and pupils understand how to keep themselves and others safe. Many have a good recognition of the benefits of eating healthily and that physical exercise is important to maintaining a healthy body. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities within the school which begins with the youngest children acting as class helpers of the day and

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older ones working as members of the school council. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong and are gaining increasing awareness of their community and their place in it. The attendance of the majority has improved through the hard work of staff. However, there is an unusually high number of pupils who are persistent absentees which affects their progress and is unsatisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The large majority of lessons observed during the inspection were satisfactory. Some teaching was good and a small proportion was inadequate. This variability in teaching and learning is clearly reflected in the sample of pupils' work which shows that over time most teaching is no more than satisfactory.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and there are good relationships across the school. Where teaching is effective, pupils stay on task and are keen to do their best. However, in too many lessons the pace is too slow and pupils spend too long listening to explanations and then lose concentration. There are too few opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner, for role-play or talking to a group of their

<sup>1</sup> 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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peers to develop their confidence in speaking publicly.

The level of challenge presented in lessons is variable because staff do not make enough use of a reasonable range of assessment information to set challenging work for groups of pupils of different abilities. Too often they are presented with work sheets that require little more than a one or two word answer. This particularly impacts on the quality of learning of the potentially higher attaining pupils and subsequently too few reach the higher levels, particularly in their writing. While there is an extremely good number of teaching assistants, many with bilingual skills, they are not always deployed well enough. They either sit at the edge of lessons without any involvement, or conversely, try to do too much for the pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities and constrain their learning as a result.

The school makes satisfactory use of nationally recognised schemes of work to form the basis for the curriculum. But this is not translated well enough into effective lesson planning. The quality of planning is very variable and too little emphasis is placed on pupils learning by doing. For instance, where pupils are learning about electrical circuits they are asked to draw pictures of a circuit rather than make one. Similarly, when solving one- and two-step mathematical problems there is no practical element to the activity even when some of the problems involve measurements. The enrichment of the curriculum is an emerging strength. There are reasonable opportunities at lunchtime and after school to involve pupils in sports and other activities. The curriculum for pupils at the early stages of learning English is evolving. Whilst there has always been an extensive programme of support for these pupils, the introduction of the nationally recognised scheme of work to provide consistency and progression is at an early stage. For a large school the pupils feel they are known by the staff, are safe and have lots of adults available to help them. The extensive links with a wide range of agencies are effective in supporting those who are vulnerable. The learning mentor and others in key support roles work effectively with pupils, staff and other organisations. The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory, although the management and use of assessment information has weaknesses. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and rarely informs the pupils what they need to do next to improve their work.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school has had some change over the past year when the headteacher was absent

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for a term. This limited the amount of development taking place for a while, but this is changing. The newly appointed headteacher has made a very effective start to her work. She has been ably and willingly supported by the deputy headteacher and together they form a team that clearly recognises what is working well and what needs to be improved. They have rightly identified there is too little coherence and consistency in what the school does and too much left to individuals or groups of teachers which limits whole school progress. The headteacher has instituted an effective programme of monitoring all staff herself to recognise where teaching is effective. This is being rolled out further and involves other staff in increasingly rigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures.

The staff team rightly acknowledge school improvement will be a big job. Feedback after lessons to some staff indicates that a few believe the quality of provision is better than it actually is. But many staff across the school are being won-over to the changes necessary and the leadership team are embedding ambition and driving improvement. Several new initiatives have recently been introduced and others are clearly planned but senior staff recognise the danger of initiative overload and realise that accountability needs to be improved so that staff know exactly what they have to do. The school has an unusually large team of senior staff without a class base. While many of these staff are timetabled to support specific groups of pupils this may not be the most effective use of resources and the school is rightly reviewing such roles.

Governors are supportive of the school and many represent the views of parents and the local community. However, there is a growing awareness that their role is also changing. There is a developing programme of focused visits by governors in order to ensure they are well informed and have first-hand evidence and the school moves forward at a faster pace. Safeguarding procedures include appropriate checks of those who work with the children and off the school site. The school works effectively to unite different groups in the school and local community and is aware of the need to extend the global elements of community cohesion work. The school promotes equality of opportunity satisfactorily but is also aware of the need to further ensure some girls are brought to the fore in some activities.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter one of the four parallel classes at the start of the year of their fifth birthday with very widely ranging skills and early experiences. Some have attended other pre-school settings including Nursery and have reasonable confidence and skills in speaking English. Others enter with little experience outside the family home and only speak their home language. Each class has effective bilingual support and most children settle well and make satisfactory overall progress. The staff work in open and adjoining class bases which make quiet activities difficult. The planning of lessons is largely satisfactory and the children working in groups with teachers or support staff are kept on task and often make good progress in these activities. However, children working independently do not make much progress when they are not gainfully employed and either just chat or simply colour in photocopied pictures. The school rightly recognises that the outdoor area is a priority for improvement as it is too small for four classes; is not equipped well enough and does little to inspire learning. The newly appointed leader has good skills but is too new to the post to have an impact on reviewing established practices and moving the setting further forward.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

While only a relatively small number of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire the majority of parents who did respond are happy with what the school provides for their children and made only a few comments. The main concern is over the organisation of school lunches. There has been an historic decision that lunches will only be served in one of the two school halls so that the second can be used for other purposes. This means that about 800 children are fed in one hall. To make this possible

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the school made the decision to limit the numbers bringing packed lunches and there is a long waiting list for those wishing to do so. Inspectors believe this is an unusual decision that has implications for equality of opportunity and is something the school may wish to reconsider.

Other concerns raised by a few parents included how rigorous the school is in following up allegations of bullying. Discussions with a large number of pupils indicate that they unanimously feel safe and know there is always someone they can talk to if necessary. Parents would also like the school to take more account of their views and more information about how to help their children at home.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Highfield Junior and Infant 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 101 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 831 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	66	65	34	34	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	51	50	45	45	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	46	47	47	8	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	38	38	54	53	7	7	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	45	45	51	50	5	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	41	44	44	12	12	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	35	58	57	7	7	0	0
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	35	56	55	6	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	34	52	51	13	13	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	32	54	53	11	11	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	26	52	51	15	15	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	37	37	51	50	6	6	4	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	46	48	48	6	6	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 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



20 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Highfield Junior and Infant School, Birmingham, B8 3QF

Thank you very much for looking after us when we came to visit your school. What a big school it is! We enjoyed meeting many of you in lessons, at lunchtime, in the playground and during assemblies. We also enjoyed talking to some of you on the school council and chatting to others in and around school. I would like to share with you some of the things we found out while we were in Highfield.

We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education. When you enter school you are often very quiet but you grow into more confident young people by the time you leave. We know that you like coming to school and that you behave well. We think that most things the school does are satisfactory but that Highfields is entering a new chapter of its work and lots of things may be changing soon. Ms Kundi has loads of ideas of how to improve the school and make your work more interesting.

We think there are several things the school could do better. We have asked the staff to make sure you reach higher standards particularly in English. We want them to improve their planning to make sure you are provided with interesting things to do that make you work a bit harder. We think you should have more opportunities to discuss your ideas and take part in practical sessions where you find things out for yourself. We hope there will be fewer worksheets for you to use, more opportunities to write in detail and that the marking of your work makes clear what needs to be improved. We have asked the school to make sure support staff give you just the right amount of help when you need it most.

All of you can help the school even more too. Please try to work hard all of the time and make sure you take part in discussions more - come on girls don't leave it to the boys to answer! We would also like you to try to encourage your parents to make sure you attend school every day as too many of you are absent from school for too long.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall Lead inspector

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