

Highlands Primary School

Highlands Gardens, Ilford, Essex IG1 3LE

Inspection dates

6 to 7 March 2019

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

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school and are very keen to provide every pupil with the best education.
- Leadership has created a distinctive culture, which seeks to identify and remove any barriers to learning.
- The governing body is very well informed, and it makes an excellent contribution to the school's development.
- Teachers use books and texts as a source of stimulation, learning and reflection. Words and their meanings, in context, are discussed at length, and pupils engage attentively.
- Mathematics is taught highly effectively.
- Pupils are very respectful. They listen to each other's ideas, and support each other in their learning. This has a strong and positive impact on their progress.
- Leaders have ensured that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), make strong progress in their learning.
- Positive relationships enable pupils to gain confidence and feel safe at school. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. They are taught how to manage their feelings and apply themselves to their learning.
- Leadership of the early years is strong, demonstrating ambition for children's development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to extend and refine the approach to teaching and learning across the school so that all pupils, including the most able, make the maximum progress in all subjects.
- Intensify efforts to raise attendance further.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders at all levels, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school and are very keen to provide every pupil with the best education. All members of staff share in the ethos and values of the school, and they have common goals for success.
- School self-evaluation is accurate and has been used very effectively to transform the school over the past five years. Leaders know what they need to do to maintain the high quality of provision and the outcomes that pupils achieve.
- Leaders have created a well-designed curriculum, which ensures that there is a consistent approach to learning across the school. Experiences inside and outdoors, a focus on expanding vocabulary and on promoting discussion are central to the skills that teachers promote. There are opportunities for pupils to learn in depth across all subjects. The curriculum includes many additional topics and extracurricular activities. For example, residential visits and trips to places of interest, as well as participation in musical and sporting events, enrich pupils' experiences.
- Leadership has created a distinctive culture, which seeks to identify and remove any barriers to learning. The school works closely with parents to ensure that all pupils make the best progress they can. A secure and nurturing environment encourages and supports pupils to express themselves with confidence. This results in all pupils making substantial progress and attaining high standards.
- Teaching and learning are monitored rigorously, and the performance management of staff is linked closely to the impact on pupils' progress. Teachers receive constructive and helpful guidance on how they can improve their work. They are highly motivated and keen to take part in further training so that they continue to improve. The well-being of teachers is a priority, and their views are taken into account. As a result, teachers said that they feel valued.
- Leaders ensure that funding for disadvantaged pupils is used very well to provide additional support in lessons and before school. This support has been instrumental in raising the attainment of these pupils, and in securing their strong progress.
- Special funding for pupils who have SEND is used exceptionally well. There is a collaborative approach to identifying pupils' next steps and providing individualised support.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported very well. Leaders ensure that pupils are taught about life in modern Britain. As a result, pupils develop a deep understanding of the importance of issues such as community and respect for others. Pupils appreciate and talk about each other's high-quality art and topic work that is displayed around the school. Pupils' work reflects and values diversity very well.
- Parents are very positive about the school and typically made comments such as, 'The school is very good at letting parents know what the children are learning,' and 'There has been a vast improvement over the years.' Parents of children at the early stages of learning to speak English are appreciative of the support their children receive.

- Leaders have implemented systems which have helped to raise attendance and reduce persistent absence. As a result, attendance has improved. However, the rate of attendance is still below the nationally expected figure.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is very well informed, and it makes an excellent contribution to the school's development. There is constant challenge and accountability to ensure that the school sustains the highest standards. The governors have a very good insight into the school's effectiveness. They ask searching questions about the progress of different groups of pupils. They review pupil premium funding and keep the appraisal of staff under review. They are relentless in their pursuit of excellence.
- Governors fulfil their statutory duties extremely well, for example in relation to checks on the suitability of staff and safeguarding.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Procedures and systems for keeping pupils safe and supporting pupils requiring help and support are thorough. Staff are conversant with recent safeguarding requirements about, for example, the 'Prevent' duty, child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and children missing from education. Training is regular. Staff are vigilant, and records are carefully maintained in relation to the checks carried out on all adults who work at the school. A high level of vigilance means that there is a consistent approach to dealing swiftly with any referrals. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure that all pupils are kept safe.
- The curriculum supports pupils to learn about danger and how to avoid it. Pupils learn what to do if they find themselves in potentially dangerous situations. They know the importance of telling an adult if they have any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teachers are fully committed to providing pupils with the best education, and they have high expectations of pupils. Pupils' positive values and attitudes to learning ensure that they are eager to do their best and are prepared to challenge themselves. Because teaching is supportive and builds resilience, pupils feel safe to make contributions, and their peers value this.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in asking the pupils probing questions. Across the school, the use and development of literacy and numeracy to support learning in other subjects is well established. High expectations of the way pupils should listen, discuss and share vocabulary are a key feature of the values and work of the school. In response, pupils are motivated to do well, show enjoyment, make strong progress and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers demonstrate strong subject knowledge. Structured teaching and focussed explanations mean that pupils are clear about what is expected of them. Teaching

encourages perseverance and resilience, which means that pupils stay on task and deepen their learning.

- Arrangements for assessing how well pupils learn are used very effectively to ensure that pupils' next steps are planned carefully. Pupils contribute to these assessments, and this helps to ensure high expectations and a sense of ownership.
- Additional adults in the classroom support learning very well. Pupils benefit greatly from one-to-one and small group sessions, which help them to stay on track and focus on their learning. For example, pupils with SEND enjoy using all of their senses to explore topics. All groups, including those with SEND, make strong progress in their learning.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is highly effective, resulting in pupils reaching high standards. Typically, across the school, teachers use books and texts as a source of stimulation, learning and reflection. Words and their meanings are discussed at length, and pupils engage attentively. As result, pupils use wide-ranging vocabulary in their conversations and writing.
- Mathematics is taught highly effectively. Consequently, pupils develop key basic skills in arithmetic. Teaching methods also promote mathematical vocabulary and problem-solving approaches. As a result, pupils can use and apply their skills and knowledge to solve real-life problems and make substantial progress.
- Teachers promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural values across all subjects. This is reflected in the willingness of pupils to share their knowledge and learning. For example, in discussions with inspectors, older pupils talked about what they understood by the term 'altruism'. They knew that this means a concern for the well-being of others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Teachers demonstrate genuine concern for the personal development of pupils and are strong role models. They set high standards in line with the schools' core values of respect, friendship, responsibility, perseverance and kindness. As a result, pupils are very respectful. They listen to each other's ideas, and support each other in their learning. This has a strong positive impact on their progress and is a key strength of the school.
- Positive relationships enable pupils to be confident and feel safe at school. Pupils are not afraid to make mistakes. For example, children in the Nursery who were at the early stages of speaking English were happy to share their limited vocabulary with adults. This is because staff are supportive and value their efforts.
- The school encourages positive personal and social values, which helps pupils to become aspirational in their outlook. For example, older pupils look forward to secondary school. They told inspectors, 'It's going to be really interesting because we can find out much more about volcanoes and earthquakes.' Younger pupils said simply that they wanted to come to school to learn.

- Pupils know how to stay safe. For example, they talk knowledgeably about e-safety and about how to stay free from online bullying. Pupils are forthright about various types of racist behaviour, religious bigotry and name-calling. They are taught how to oppose these unacceptable behaviours in assembly, and in personal and social education. Pupils know what to do if they have any concerns.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted across the curriculum. As a result, pupils learn about, and can explain, key values. For example, pupils in a science lesson were able to explain why clean water is so important for third world countries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite, articulate and welcoming. Exemplary attitudes and behaviour for learning are the accepted order.
- Staff are highly effective in managing children's and pupils' behaviour. Staff communicate high expectations across the school. Pupils are taught how to manage their feelings and apply themselves to their learning. Without any prompting or correction, they line up and enter the building, quietly. When moving around the site, pupils maintain good self-control. Exceptionally good behaviour means that pupils are ready to learn.
- Persistent absence has reduced significantly, but attendance is below average. This is because a small core group do not attend regularly. This is in spite of the school doing all that it can to persuade parents to work with them. Nevertheless, leaders are committed to efforts to raise attendance further.
- The overwhelming majority of parents said that the school was quick to act if they had any concerns regarding instances of unwanted behaviours or bullying. Instances of poor behaviour are rare.
- The school has not permanently excluded any pupil. There has been one fixed-term exclusion in the past 6 years.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points. When children join the early years, most are working below the levels expected for their age. As a result of determined leadership and strong teaching, all groups of pupils learn exceptionally well at this school. Consequently, pupils are prepared very well for the next stage of their education and later life.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that standards in all year groups have risen consistently since 2014. In 2018, 87% of pupils achieved the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics. This is well above the national proportion. The three-year average mathematics score was in the top 10% nationally.
- Effective teaching over time has resulted in consistently high rates of progress. For example, in 2018, in key stage 2, progress in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly above average, and in the highest 10% nationally. For the past two years, progress in reading, writing and mathematics has been in the top 20% nationally. This

represents outstanding progress for all groups of pupils, including pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils.

- School leaders have created a curriculum and have embedded teaching approaches which focus on rich vocabulary and its use. As a result, pupils enjoy reading, and they reach high standards in reading and comprehension. By the end of Year 1, pupils have learned how to use their phonics skills well to help them to tackle unfamiliar words. Over time, an above-average proportion of Year 1 pupils meet the expected standard in the national phonics screening check.
- Clear leadership, based on consistently applied values, has secured high standards in literacy. By Year 6, pupils are able to read, understand and reflect on a wide range of words and texts. They can hold thoughtful conversations which demonstrate their breadth of knowledge. For example, pupils were able to discuss 'venerable' and 'insolence' with insight and examples.
- Because leadership of SEND is strong, these pupils make outstanding progress. Leaders have ensured that well-trained staff provide targeted support in class. Additional classes are tailor-made to match their needs.
- Work seen in a sample of books shows high rates of progress across the school, and in all subjects. Most-able pupils do well over time. There are a few occasions, in some subjects, when they are not moved on in their learning as soon as they have mastered a skill.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Leadership of the early years is strong, and demonstrates ambition for children's development. Leaders identify training needs, and they provide bespoke opportunities for staff which enhance their practice. As a result, children make excellent progress.
- Accurate assessment of needs on entry by practitioners ensures that activities are planned and pitched at the right level to ensure challenge. Practice is built around nurture and care by all adults, and around creating strong and supportive relationships. The rich and engaging curriculum is centred on widening children's experiences and vocabulary. Teaching is highly effective. As a result, the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development exceeds the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that the provision in both Nursery and Reception Years is safe, attractive and welcoming. They have ensured that high-quality resources are available inside and outdoors. Spaces are used well by adults, and children are encouraged to be creative and use their imagination. For example, in Reception Year, children were fully engaged with the theme of 'under the sea', exploring books, counting shells, drawing and painting.
- The development of early language and literacy skills is strong. Well over half of all children in the early years speak English as an additional language. Many begin school with limited language skills. However, as a result of the diverse opportunities provided to extend vocabulary, children swiftly catch up. Adults provide engaging learning experiences which stimulate thinking. As a result, children soon become confident to discuss how to solve problems and think critically.

- The teaching of phonics and early mark making is strong. As a result, children develop confidence and competence in their reading and writing skills.
- Leaders work closely with parents, for example through home visits. This is so they know how to support children well. Practitioners involve children in planning for their next steps. This ensures that from the very earliest age, children develop a sense of responsibility and belonging.
- Teachers and adults quickly form positive relationships with the children and become strongly positive role models. Consequently, children behave very well, and show care and consideration for each other.
- Leaders provide effective safeguarding training. As a result, all practitioners are diligent, and they ensure that children are kept safe at all times.

School details

Unique reference number	131013
Local authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	10058968

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	690
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Colin Runeckles
Executive Headteacher	Dr Kulvarn Atwal
Telephone number	020 8554 0044
Website	www.highlandsprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	admin.highlands@redbridge.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 May 2018

Information about this school

- Highlands is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- 33% of pupils are from an Asian or Asian British Pakistani heritage. Other pupils are from a variety of other ethnic heritages, including Asian or Asian British Indian (22%), Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi (17%).
- 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is well above the national average. 13% of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. This is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or statement is around the national average. The proportion of pupils who receive special needs support is around the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe teaching and learning, including undertaking joint observations with school leaders. They also spent time looking through pupils' books and listening to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, and with a representative from the local authority. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, and with newly qualified teachers.
- Inspectors spoke with a number of parents before the school day. They also considered 81 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, as well as other conversations with pupils in school and in the playground. Views from 57 staff questionnaires were also considered. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- A wide range of documents was scrutinised, including records relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance, safeguarding procedures and the school's analysis of how well it is improving. Inspectors also examined the school's records of checks made on the quality of teaching.

Inspection team

Martin Roberts, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David Bryant	Ofsted Inspector
Abdul-Hayee Murshad	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Brooks	Ofsted Inspector

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