

Heather Primary School

Main Street, Heather, Coalville, LE67 2QP

Inspection dates 7–8 November 2012

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|--------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory | 3 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects because teaching is good. Lessons are typically planned and prepared well, and almost all pupils behave well and are keen to learn.
- Standards have improved since the last inspection, and pupils develop good skills in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Interesting activities in lessons and clubs support good learning and also promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Pupils feel safe. They are considerate and helpful to staff and to each other. Relationships throughout the school are positive and supportive.
- Leadership and management, including the work of the governors, are good. Very strong teamwork means that this small school continues to run smoothly, even when key leaders are absent.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The pace of learning occasionally slows when lesson activities are slightly too easy or too difficult for some pupils.
- Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work.
- Lessons are not always at a consistently high level as teachers do not have sufficient opportunities to share their skills and learn from the good practice of others.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons taught by one higher-level teaching assistant and all four of the teachers who work on the days covered by the inspection. Six of these observations were conducted jointly with the senior leaders.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, senior and middle managers, parents and carers.
- The inspector received the views of parents and carers through 23 online responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire and informal discussions with 12 parents and carers.
- The inspector received the views of staff through 10 responses to the inspection questionnaire and discussions, and of pupils through both informal and pre-arranged discussions.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included the school's data on pupils' current progress, leaders' reports on lesson observations, the school's improvement plan, planning and monitoring documents, documents relating to safeguarding, and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Jo Curd, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Heather Primary School is a relatively small village school. Most classes, apart from Year 6, contain two different age groups.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and the vast majority speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional money given to schools by the government) is lower than the national average.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at the level of school action, and at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs, are higher than the national averages.
- The majority of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties.
- The headteacher was absent due to ill health at the time of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - showing pupils clearly, through marking, how they can extend or improve their work
 - providing activities in all lessons that are suitable for all pupils, and not too easy or difficult
 - enabling staff to learn from the good or better practice of others more frequently.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children start in the reception class with a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience, but overall it is broadly in line with national expectations for their age. All groups make good progress because they engage in such a wide range of interesting activities. These include dressing up and imaginary play, acting out stories using props such as mud, stones and water in a well-known story about hunting for a bear, and observing worms in a soil 'wormery'.
- Children in the reception class benefit from extensive opportunities to work inside and out, as well as adult led and their own choice of activities. Resources are extensive, although a few are slightly jaded.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils of all backgrounds and abilities have made good progress and a high proportion have reached higher National Curriculum levels. In the 2012 national tests nearly all the pupils made at least the nationally expected progress in English and mathematics, and all made at least expected progress in writing. Almost 60% reached the higher levels in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to use their basic skills, especially speaking, listening, reading and writing, in a range of subjects and lunch-time clubs. The proportion of pupils who did well in the Year 1 national tests for reading was much higher than the national average.
- Pupils supported by additional pupil premium funding progress well due to additional individual support for learning, good pastoral support and additional resources. The progress made by these pupils, along with all others, is carefully monitored. Well-focused support is provided wherever necessary.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make good progress, because they are given good help and guidance by well-trained teaching assistants and specialists from outside the school.
- Pupils who can learn more quickly make good progress. This is because so many activities, particularly in Year 6, are so interesting, engaging and open-ended, allowing them ample scope to excel.
- Occasionally, progress slows because activities are sometimes slightly too easy or too difficult for some pupils and marking does not always clearly show pupils how they can improve. Occasionally, those who work more quickly have to wait and those who find work difficult cannot continue without help.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded through Parent View or discussions are happy with their children's progress. Pupils are positive and rightly proud of their achievements.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Observations, pupils' books and school records show that teaching over time is good. There are inconsistencies between lessons and classes, however, and teachers do not always have enough opportunities to learn from the good or better practice of others.

- During the inspection the quality of teaching in over a third of the lessons observed was outstanding. This is particularly the case higher up the school, where pupils make rapid progress through vibrant and creative group activities.
- In a Year 6 science lesson, pupils were learning how creatures adapt to their environments. They were given imaginary scenarios about four different planets and in a group created their own animals, or birds, which could live there. All groups drew on previous knowledge, discussed this together and extended their learning through talk and research. One created 'batswoops' which had the wing span of bats and were able to swoop, another created 'pelicocks' which had features of pelicans and peacocks, and another created animals where the males produced the young. This open-ended creative activity was highly suitable for all, and led to excellent learning while enhancing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.
- Pupils benefit from imaginative links between different subjects. For example, pupils in the Year 4/5 class developed their vocabulary, scientific understanding and artistic skills through creating paintings of fireworks in the night sky. They successfully discussed, extended their learning and were given a clear explanation of how the wax crayons prevent the water-based wash from touching the paper and how this could be applied to other contexts in life.
- Teaching assistants ably support disabled pupils and those with other special educational needs in lessons and in small groups withdrawn from lessons for intensive help, although tasks are occasionally too difficult for some of these pupils. Those needing further help benefit from individual tuition from a visiting teacher and specialist support from external professionals.
- The teaching of reading is effective because groups are organised well, allowing pupils of similar learning levels to work together. Pupils have lots of opportunities to read and hear stories together.
- Where the quality of teaching is less effective, pupils sometimes have to wait because they finish tasks quickly or the work is too difficult for them to do independently. Pupils are not always sure how they can improve previous work. For example, work in books shows that occasionally pupils are praised for writing, even though they have not spelt words correctly and are therefore not sure that they need to correct them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- School records, observations and discussions show that behaviour over time is good. A very small number of pupils find it difficult to behave consistently well, but they are managed well so learning continues without interruption. The school works well with other schools and professionals to support the behaviour of disabled pupils and those who have other special educational needs.
- Staff use the school's well-established behaviour policy consistently and effectively, so there are very few disruptions in most classes and behaviour is generally good in and out of lessons. All the pupils know that if any of them behave inappropriately, their names will be put on the thunder cloud and know exactly what the penalties are if this continues. They also know how they can make amends and have their names put back into the pot of gold.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying. They know that there is little of any type in the school, and are confident that if any does arise it will be taken seriously and sorted out.

- Pupils are thoughtful and considerate to each other, as well as helpful to staff. For example, one older girl took pots of water for each of the pupils on her table in an art lesson and a Year 6 boy asked if he should take the younger children back to their class after an inspection discussion.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about their work. A younger girl, busily engaged in melting 'gel' snow, said, 'This is just the best day ever!' In another class, a lower ability boy and girl excitedly discussed how they could make 'marvellous medicine' out of 'smashed lipstick' and by 'creaming toothpaste and aftershave' together.
- Pupils work well together in lessons, building their learning and social skills. They successfully learn that it is acceptable and valuable to 'magpie' good ideas from others. They try hard and remain settled if work is too difficult or they have to wait when they have finished tasks.
- Pupils eagerly and happily undertake a range of jobs and responsibilities such as monitoring assemblies, leading lunch-time clubs and supporting playground games.
- All pupils attend daily acts of collective worship. This brings the whole school together, and helps them to learn important lessons that support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The leadership and management are good

- The governing body and headteacher have successfully established a strong senior leadership team and effective links with other schools, so that this small school can continue effectively even when key leaders are absent.
- The senior leadership team effectively includes a range of staff and roles, so that everyone shares a common vision for positive outcomes for all. Staff provide good support to each other, as well as the pupils and their families.
- Strong links with the local authority and other schools provide additional challenge and support. For example, other headteachers and local authority officers have successfully contributed to monitoring and improving the overall quality of teaching.
- Leaders are well aware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and work effectively to improve it through well-chosen training and salary incentives. As a result the quality of teaching has risen since the last inspection, although some inconsistencies remain and staff do not always have sufficient opportunities to observe, or learn from, the good practice of others.
- A recent audit shows that financial management is effective. Leaders successfully use pupil premium funding to provide additional support staff to help learning and pastoral care, and to purchase additional resources for particular classes. This promotes the achievement and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of eligible pupils, and also benefits their classmates.
- The taught curriculum includes a rich range of subjects that provide very memorable experiences for all pupils, and prepares them well for later life and learning.
- Leaders make sure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed, because they frequently and carefully track pupils' attainment and progress, and provide additional help and guidance where necessary. They ensure that all pupils read to adults regularly and have access to up-to-

date information and communication technology equipment.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governors are knowledgeable, astute and tenacious. Carefully-chosen training, good communication and frequent visits to the school ensure that they have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for development, including how well it performs against similar schools nationally, and a clear strategy for making further improvements. They have a clear understanding of the budget and the way it is spent, including how pupil premium funding is used to improve pupils' progress, and make sure that teachers' pay relates to how well pupils learn. They display a strong commitment to ensuring that all staff and pupils do well. They also make sure that the policies and procedures to safeguard pupils meet current national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| Grade | Judgement | Description |
| Grade 1 | Outstanding | An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 2 | Good | A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment. |
| Grade 3 | Requires improvement | A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection. |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate | <p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> |

School details

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| Unique reference number | 119926 |
| Local authority | Leicestershire |
| Inspection number | 401888 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 90 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Hannah Brewin |
| Headteacher | Lou Harrison |
| Date of previous school inspection | 6 July 2010 |
| Telephone number | 01530 260257 |
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