

Heathfields Infant School

Saxon Close, Wilnecote, Tamworth, B77 5LU

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	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.

- Achievement is now good and the progress pupils make is above that made nationally. Rising rapidly, attainment is in line with national averages in English and mathematics.
- There are no significant gaps in performance between groups of pupils, and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as their peers.
- Teaching is good with some outstanding practice. This is due to well-planned and imaginative lessons.
- The leadership of the executive headteacher is very strong. He is well supported by an ambitious senior leadership team drawn from both the infant and junior schools.
- The partnership working with nearby schools is a considerable success.
- Pupils now read widely and well. They enjoy books and talk enthusiastically about their stories.
- Behaviour is good. Both adults and other children look out for each other. This is a caring and inclusive school and attitudes to learning are good.
- The school works well with families and parents to ensure pupils are safe, well looked after and happy.
- The curriculum is good. It is also adapted quickly to meet the needs of any pupils whom the school feel may be at risk of underperformance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment remains variable across year groups with standards in Year 1 not yet matching those in other year groups.
- Attainment varies in boys' writing and problem solving in numeracy for more-able pupils.
- There is some variation in the quality of the monitoring of teaching by middle leaders.
- Attendance levels vary between classes and are average overall.
- The quality of teaching is good but variable. This reduces the progress made by pupils in some classes or subjects.
- The sharing of best practice is not yet used consistently or in a way that always supports school priorities.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at 24 hours' notice.
- Every teacher was observed teaching.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, members of the governing body and senior leaders, including those currently working at the partner junior school.
- A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority. A wide range of school documentation was reviewed, including the school improvement plan and monitoring records. Pupils' workbooks were also examined.
- Alongside an analysis of the 16 responses on Parent View, discussions were held with a small sample of parents and the 108 responses to the school's parental questionnaire were analysed.
- There is a privately run on-site nursery provision which was not inspected on this occasion.

Inspection team

Ceri Morgan, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Information about this school

- The school has continued to grow and is larger than other infant schools.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is above national averages.
- The partnership working with a group of local schools continues. This is known as a Co-operative Learning Trust. The major partner however is the nearby Wilnecote Junior School and senior leadership positions are shared across the schools. This includes the role of executive headteacher.
- There is also shared governance with a view to stronger and more formal ties in the future.
- There are new teachers in three classes, with some further change yet to come.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share best practice in teaching and link the outcomes of this to the school improvement plan.
- Develop the roles of middle leaders to enhance their monitoring and secure high attainment.
- Improve the attainment of all pupils, including in boys' writing, more able and in Year 1 by:
 - increasing the opportunities for investigative work in numeracy for more-able pupils
 - ensuring greater consistency in the way writing is taught to boys.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter school with standards well below what might be expected in some cases, particularly in their communication skills. However they then make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and work well together, develop an extensive vocabulary and begin to recognise and sound out letters and numbers.
- During Year 1 the progress made is more variable but is always at least satisfactory. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs those known to be eligible for the pupil premium make similar progress to their peers.
- In Year 2 pupils make more rapid progress, again in English and mathematics. This good progress helps pupils who sometimes start low attain at least in line with all pupils nationally and in some key areas even better. In 2012, three quarters of all pupils reached the required levels in English and mathematics with around a quarter reaching the higher levels. This improvement has been maintained for the last two years and was significantly improved in 2012. Together this represents good achievement.
- Pupils now read well and use a wide range of texts to stimulate interest. The school encourages them to enjoy books, including hosting pyjama parties to foster interest. These events are well supported by families and pupils show enthusiasm for reading.
- The school organises special sessions to help pupils sound out letters and blends of letters (phonics) which is helping pupils attempt unfamiliar words with success. There is some variation in some classes here with a few pupils still unable to tackle longer words with confidence. This success in phonics is used in other lessons as well as reading and is helping with the development of writing skills.
- Writing is improving rapidly and, although there are inconsistencies in the amount of time spent writing or the quality of handwriting between classes, it is generally good. There is little difference in the performance of boys in their writing compared to girls apart from Year 1 where boys do less well.
- Pupils have an enthusiasm for mathematics. They can count well and add and subtract two digit numbers accurately. This skill is less secure for larger numbers and on occasions more-able pupils are asked to do tasks which are too easy. This leaves them less able to apply their knowledge to solving simple problems. Pupils recognise the properties and names of familiar shapes but are less comfortable with three-dimensional solids and charts.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good with some examples of outstanding teaching. In one lesson observed, some of the youngest pupils attempted to tackle a challenging mini-assault course. This required a blend of balance and courage. Their expressions of concentration and effort were magical. They combined a blend of risk taking ('let's have a go') and risk management ('let's stay safe') which was explained clearly and effectively. This led to outstanding progress in their physical development and resilience.
- There remains some variation in the quality of teaching across the school. This is partly due to the newness of some teachers but also due to occasional lapses into sessions in which pupils listen for too long and do not get enough time to practise their skills. This is especially true of

some literacy lessons. Similarly some teachers, in an attempt to maintain the enthusiasm of pupils, are too quick to fill the space whilst pupils are thinking with extra comments and questions or to over-excite them.

- Those pupils who require additional help get it. This is usually via special sessions in which additional individual help is given (as in reading) or through the good work of a strong and committed team of teaching assistants (during lessons).
- The key strengths in teaching are the use of relationships to encourage pupils to have a go and well-planned lessons. Teachers and assistants use questioning well to prompt better understanding although there is a tendency to accept brief answers rather than extended ones.
- Teachers use their own subject knowledge well, although this is more secure in literacy than in mathematics where precision sometimes dips.
- The marking of books is up to date and always constructive. Occasional errors creep in and there is a tendency to summarise what has been done rather than to add any next steps but in general it is accurate and helpful.
- Teachers always seek to make lessons interesting, especially by the use of new technology and other engaging activities. This is why pupils have an enthusiasm for their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is good and pupils show respect and consideration for each other. They say there is no bullying and the worst that can happen is some bad language or name calling at playtimes, which are easily sorted out. Behaviour at lunchtimes is noticeably bubblier than at other times.
- The school is a very caring place where pupils help each other out and allow each other to work undisturbed. This is best exemplified in very good attitudes to learning in all lessons.
- Pupils are punctual to lessons and show respect and consideration towards adults and other pupils. They share resources well and are polite and welcoming to visitors.
- Children say they feel safe at school and know about healthy lifestyles and avoiding risk.

The leadership and management are good

- The executive headteacher has had significant impact on the school in a relatively short period of time. He is known to many families from his work in the junior school but he has carried change with both ambition and energy. This is shown by the newly established joint working with senior staff in both the infant and junior schools as a new senior leadership team. This group have an accurate view of strengths and priorities in school and work well together.
- The headteacher is very well supported by this team, respected by families and staff and has a rigorous approach to using data to sharpen school priorities. For example, he has instilled an analytical approach to assessing how much pupils know or what they need to work on. This is now used by all teachers in planning. This process has led to good achievement in a short period of time.
- The whole school has engaged with the process fully and recognises the contribution made to a change of culture by the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of their work.

- There is some variation in the quality of monitoring of lessons by middle leaders. This is partly due to the newness of their roles but not all lesson observations focus on pupil progress clearly enough, commenting instead on what teachers are doing.
- There is a very thoughtful performance management system in which teachers are now starting to evaluate their own performance through what progress their classes make. This is relatively new however.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium get a good deal. The additional funding the school receives for them is used well for either additional individual support or extra activities. This spending is monitored closely and as a consequence this group of pupils also have good achievement.
- The curriculum is adapted quickly to meet the needs of pupils who might otherwise underperform. For example, in response to boys not doing so well as girls in writing, teachers have held sessions for boys on tent building leading to extended writing. Similarly the school now is the proud owner of several hens. With rather exotic names these hens strut their stuff having been hand-picked, loved and looked after, written about and measured, making aspects of the curriculum literally come to life for the pupils.
- The local authority has supported the school well with additional consultant advice and leadership support. Their support has contributed to the improvement seen.
- The school takes the safety and well-being of the pupils very seriously and all safeguarding checks are appropriately carried out.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are in the process of blending the expertise of the junior school with that of the infant school. They meet regularly and hold the leadership to account well. They have carried out a challenging self-assessment and know about the quality of teaching and the school's priorities in detail. The Chair of the Governing Body can talk in detail about school data and how this compares with similar schools, whilst knowing adults and pupils well. Although there are some vacancies as a result of the re-organisation, governors manage the budget well and have a clear idea of the impact of spending on pupil progress, for example in the way the pupil premium is spent. They manage a sensible and rigorous performance management system well, rewarding success only when it is deserved. Governors ensure that they receive the professional training they need to develop.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
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

Unique reference number	124158
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	398980

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Trappett
Headteacher	Jonathan Keay (Executive Head)
Date of previous school inspection	28 June 2011
Telephone number	01827 475065
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