

Highfield Primary School

Bridgenorth Avenue, Bradfield Road, Urmston, Manchester, M41 9PA

Inspection dates 5–6 December 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 good and has improved rapidly since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. The work is organised to motivate and involve pupils in lessons. Very positive relationships support pupils' learning.
- Behaviour is good, pupils are respectful, polite and well mannered. Pupils feel safe.
- All statutory requirements in relation to safeguarding procedures are met.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well, which results in them making good progress.
- Leadership and management are good and have been instrumental in improving pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. Leaders can demonstrate that there are effective systems and procedures in place to make improvements.
- The acting headteacher has been successful in identifying what the school needs to do to improve.
- The governance of the school is strong. The governing body has supported the change in leadership very well. The governors have continued to challenge the senior leaders to improve the pupils' learning and they have high expectations for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils make good progress in reading and writing in Key Stage 1.
- The teaching of letters and sounds does not match all pupils' needs.
- Not all teaching is good or better. For example, information and communication technology is not used enough to develop pupils' skills.
- More-able pupils do not always make enough progress in their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons, observed small group sessions and listened to groups of pupils read in Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, school staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and a local authority representative.
- Inspectors took account of parents' views through the 42 responses to the on-line questionnaires (Parent View) and questionnaires and surveys carried out by the school.
- A range of documents were analysed, including the school's data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, the school's audit of provision and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Jean Tarry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Rebecca Lawton

Additional Inspector

Maria McGarry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also broadly average.
- There is an acting headteacher and deputy headteacher in post because the governing body is in the process of advertising for permanent appointments to these positions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further and improve the rate of progress in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 by ensuring that all pupils increase their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them develop their reading and writing skills more quickly.
- Improve teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring lesson planning shows precisely what more-able pupils are to learn, how teachers will check if this has been achieved and next steps for pupils to improve their learning, and then making sure that teachers carry this out effectively
 - increase opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with attainment that is broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and quickly acquire knowledge and skills across the curriculum. They are well prepared for the next stage of their learning when they leave the Reception Year, particularly in reading, writing and number work.
- In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress. Mathematics is very strong, with many pupils achieving significantly above the national average for the last three years. Reading and writing is not as strong, with weakness in pupils' understanding of letters and sounds. However, attainment is significantly above average in all subjects combined over the last three years. Achievement is good overall.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 also make good progress, and at the end of Year 6, attainment is high in English and mathematics. All pupils are reaching the level expected for their age and about a third reach beyond this level. Some pupils, however, particularly the more able, do not always progress as quickly as they should in English and mathematics. There is a rising trend of attainment over a three year period. Achievement is good as pupils learn well in a range of subjects.
- School data and inspection evidence shows that progress is good in all year groups and this has been sustained over time. Pupils achieve, enjoy and learn a range of skills.
- Year 6 pupils have an enthusiasm for reading. They have developed a preference for different types of books and authors. The progress of reading and writing for some pupils in Key Stage 1 could be even better.
- Groups of pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable generally make similar progress to other pupils. However, there are some new pupils who speak English as an additional language whose understanding of the sounds that letters make requires improvement.
- Gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils in the school and similar groups nationally have narrowed since the last inspection. Pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding are supported across the school and generally make similar progress to the other pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress over the past few years is good overall.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching promotes learning through a practical focus. Children choose activities for themselves, both indoors and outdoors. They are regularly taught in small groups with tasks that are relevant to them and which are generally well matched to their needs. This ensures they learn at a good rate. Learning through fun and enjoyment is a focus, such as during visits to the local ski centre and the farm trip.
- In Year 2, when pupils were discussing the meaning of the nativity, they listened very well to others' views and improved their knowledge and understanding of different cultures. They are articulate speakers and can clearly present an argument even at this early stage in their education. However, pupils' linking of letters and sounds is not always strong enough to ensure the maximum progress in their reading and writing tasks, as seen when they were writing and ordering simple sentences about 'Frances and the Firefly'.
- There was some very impressive teaching in Year 6 in religious education that allowed pupils to reflect on different cultures and to develop their own views. Year 6 pupils also enjoyed performing at the Royal Northern College of Music as chefs and bridesmaids in a production based on A Midsummer's Night Dream. They are confident performers and eager learners.
- Particular strengths in teaching are in mathematics, science and religious education. Outside providers also make a positive contribution to teaching.

- The teaching of mathematics is a strength because work is well planned to match pupils' needs. The 'Maths Puzzle Day' was exciting and helped pupils to achieve successful outcomes with problem-solving work using certain strategies. During the inspection, the older pupils were observed successfully completing a range of challenging problems. Pentominoe puzzles, magic number squares and cracking codes allowed pupils to discuss ideas, record findings and challenge each other's thinking.
- More-able pupils are not always challenged to achieve the progress of which they are capable, especially in reading and writing. Teachers' plans do not always indicate what these pupils need to learn, how the teacher will check they have done so and what the next steps are to help them improve their work further.
- Teachers develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects through the themes they teach, but they do not ensure that pupils use ICT enough to help them to develop further these skills.
- Teachers mark work and give pupils some time to reflect on their mistakes. Pupils are learning how to assess their own writing. They do not always understand what steps to take to get to the next level.
- One pupil stated, 'This is a really good school as we have to concentrate on literacy and numeracy but we learn lots of fun things in other subjects like lacrosse'.
- Homework is well planned. Parents are given information and guidance about the work their children are doing.
- While teaching is good overall, the quality observed during the inspection ranged from that that required improvement to outstanding. Ensuring that all teaching is good or better is a priority for the school to tackle.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school mission statement 'C.A.R.E.', Consideration, Aspiration, Responsibility, Enjoyment, helps to support the school's behaviour programme. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and make a positive contribution to their good progress. They have a strong sense of what is good behaviour and pride themselves in knowing what is and is not acceptable.
- The way in which the school day starts has been improved recently because pupils are invited into school as soon as they arrive in the playground. This has helped with cloakroom arrangements and with preparing pupils to promptly begin learning.
- In the weekly celebration assembly, 'Star of the Week' pupils are invited to have afternoon tea in the staffroom with the acting headteacher. Parents and pupils say this has been very successful because it encourages pupils to behave and work well together. The '8's system' where pupils of mixed ages are in groups of eight for assemblies, lunchtimes and events is also successful because it fosters a caring attitude and good relationships.
- Pupils and their parents agree that the school is a safe place. Pupils say they know how to keep themselves safe and who to go to if they have an issue.
- In classrooms and on the playground, pupils' behaviour is good. Older pupils are trained to organise team games for the younger pupils at lunchtime. This allows Year 6 pupils to develop a sense of responsibility. The Highfield Pastoral Care Officers and Play Leaders act as very good role models, helping others to find friends and to play thoughtfully.
- Pupils recognise the difference between bullying and generally falling out. They report that instances of bullying are extremely rare and if they do arise, once reported to an adult the issue is resolved.
- Parents, staff and pupils are extremely positive about behaviour and safety. At lunchtime, the school bursar leads the pupils in a reflective prayer of thanks. One parent is very pleased and says 'I value that school lunches are made on site and offer our children a healthy balanced diet'.

- Attendance is above average and any issues about absence are dealt with effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school and they are proud of their regular attendance.

The leadership and management are good

- Governors and acting senior leaders are working successfully together to improve the school. There is an ambition and drive to provide high quality learning, to raise attainment and to maintain high standards for all pupils. The school is well placed to secure this and the capacity to carry on making improvements is strong.
- Leaders check thoroughly and accurately on what is working well and what requires attention. Appropriate plans to improve the school are in place and a rigorous review of the impact of actions put in place occur regularly. The tracking of pupils' progress is very effective and this has helped to raise attainment to ensure equal opportunities for all pupils and to tackle any discrimination.
- The quality of teaching and the actions taken to improve it are carefully checked. This has resulted in improvement in teaching across the school. Leaders acknowledge that aspects of phonics teaching require improvement. The management of teachers' performance is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The curriculum provides a wide ranging set of experiences for all pupils. Lessons are relevant to pupils and, therefore, interest and motivate them to learn. The curriculum is effective in promoting pupils good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Enrichment activities, such as the residential experiences, peripatetic music teaching, modern foreign languages, sports coaches and themed days ensure that pupils have memorable experiences.
- Leaders, managers at all levels and the governing body ensure that safeguarding procedures are effective and are continually looking for ways to improve them further.
- The school actively promotes community cohesion, welcomes newcomers into the school community and looks for the best ways to provide for them.
- The local authority has provided support for the acting headteacher and the governors during this time of transition in the leadership and management of this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is effective because it checks data about pupils' progress and knows how well pupils achieve. Governors have a good understanding of what is happening in school. As a result, governors ask leaders challenging questions about the performance of the school. The governing body ensures that procedures are in place to check on the performance of staff and that these link to the progress pupils make. Finances are managed well including the close monitoring of the impact of the pupil premium funding. The governing body ensures that statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils are met.

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	106329
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	403010

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	255
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michelle Adams
Headteacher	Lorna Robertson
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2008
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