

Little Heath Primary School

Spring Road, Coventry, CV6 7FN

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2013

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 make good progress in the Reception class and develop a positive attitude to their learning.
- All teachers know pupils well and plan practical and imaginative lessons so that pupils make good progress, especially in English and mathematics.
- Good systems are in place to track the progress of all groups of pupils and no pupil is allowed to fall behind.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils enjoy books and read for pleasure.
- Pupils who have newly arrived from other countries and who do not speak English are quickly made to feel at home and learn rapidly.
- Pupils who learn slowly make good progress and reach standards close to those of most others because staff understand how to help them become successful learners.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils feel safe and behave well.
- School leaders expect the best from all pupils and staff have built good partnerships with parents and other schools.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals make good progress and benefit from being taught in smaller groups.
- Governors know the school well and effectively hold leaders to account for what it does.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is almost always at least good, in some lessons teachers do not make sure that the learning planned is suitable for every pupil.
- Occasionally, the advice that teachers give to pupils on how to improve is not quite clear enough, particularly in writing.
- In some lessons, teachers do not sufficiently help pupils to link sounds and letters to improve their spelling skills.
- At times, teachers do not insist that letter shapes are carefully written so that writing is neat and legible.

Information about this inspection

- This two-day inspection was carried out with half a day’s notice.
- Each class was observed at least once; in all, 18 lessons were observed. Inspectors also attended assemblies and observed pupils in the playground and around the school.
- Inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, all teaching staff, some teaching assistants and various groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence including the school’s tracking of pupil progress, documents relating to safeguarding and special educational needs, and the school’s self-evaluation.
- Teachers’ plans and pupils’ written work were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account the views of 11 parents as recorded on Ofsted’s Parent View online survey.

Inspection team

Roisin Chambers, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Anthony Green

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds; the main groups are from Eastern Europe, Indian, African and Pakistani backgrounds.
- Far more pupils than is typical join or leave the school other than at the usual times. In 2011-12, only 15 out of 26 pupils in Year 6 had attended the school since Reception. Many of these pupils who join the school in Key Stages 1 or 2 have had little or no prior schooling.
- A significant number of pupils return to their home country for extended periods of time and miss teaching that is crucial to develop their basic skills. Others stay at the school for a short time then move to other schools nearer home. Occasionally pupils leave the school only to return within months of their departure.
- A large majority of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils funded through the pupil premium (the additional government funding provided for certain groups, including those eligible for free school meals) is double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below the national average but those supported at school action plus or have a statement of educational need is over double the national average.
- None of the school's pupils are in alternative provision (none are taught in other schools or units).
- The school does not meet the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Following the departure of the previous headteacher in July 2012, the deputy headteacher is the school's acting headteacher. The senior leadership team now includes the English and mathematics co-ordinators and the inclusion co-ordinator.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is all good or outstanding by making sure that, in all lessons, teachers plan activities that are suitable for every child, including those pupils who join the school at different times of the school year.
- Speed up pupils' progress in writing by:
 - making sure that the advice teachers give to pupils to improve their work is simple and easily understood
 - helping pupils to use their understanding of sounds and letters to improve their spelling
 - making sure that pupils take care with their handwriting so that what they are writing about is legible.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The majority of pupils join the school in Reception speaking little or no English. The attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2 is very low and standards by the end of Year 6 are low compared to those nationally. Over the last three years, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 has been low in English and mathematics. This is a result of an increase in the proportion of pupils who only stay for a short period of time at the school. Furthermore many pupils have considerable gaps in their learning and exceptionally weak basic skills on entry to the school because they have either not attended a school before or have attended for only a short period of time.
- Pupils who attend the school from Reception to Year 6 make better than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly so in reading and mathematics where pupils in many classes in Key Stage 2 are making the equivalent of almost two terms progress in one term. All groups of pupils are making better than average progress per term. This is because teaching is consistently good and progress is closely checked so that any pupil falling behind is given the help they need to achieve. Pupils who join the school at different times often make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Pupils join Reception with skills, knowledge and abilities that are exceptionally low compared to those expected for their age. Language and communication skills are the least well developed. Progress in Reception is good. Although pupils start in Year 1 with skills below other pupils of the same age in reading and writing, they are beginning to write simple words independently and to read short stories with confidence. Pupils develop good social skills and positive attitudes to learning. By the time they enter Year 1 they co-operate well with each other, follow school rules and apply themselves to learning activities with enthusiasm.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make better than average progress in reading and maths. When reading, pupils use their understanding of the sounds letters make to tackle unfamiliar words with growing confidence to help them to read fluently and with expression. They do not tackle difficult spellings with the same confidence and consequently progress in writing, although improving, is not quite so good.
- The progress pupils make in other year groups is also good. Pupils are keen to practise new skills and solve problems; this is particularly so in mathematics. Many pupils read for pleasure and are keen to discuss their current book. Over time, achievement for all groups of pupils is improving and the gaps between different groups are rapidly closing.
- By the end of Year 6 those pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress in English and good progress in mathematics. While the attainment of those pupils eligible for free school meals is below other pupils nationally in English and mathematics, the gap is starting to close. This is because pupils are taught in smaller groups and receive additional support from teaching assistants. In some instances, pupils have made the equivalent of almost two term progress in one term.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. In most lessons, these pupils benefit from challenging teacher questioning and very good support from teaching assistants. In some lessons, the work that they have been asked to do is occasionally either too difficult or too easy.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good. A small proportion of teaching observed during the inspection required improvement. Staff are keen to improve their practice. They share their ideas and receive practical advice and guidance from the excellent practitioners within the school. Across the school, staff strive to make learning practical and fun for pupils.
- Staff in the Reception class use the space well to provide a stimulating environment which encourages children to apply their skills and develop a curiosity in the world around them. There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activities.
- Progress in reading is good because it is taught well. For younger pupils there is an appropriate emphasis on teaching the sounds that letters make and this particularly benefits children with very little English. However, these skills are inconsistently used in writing activities to help pupils improve their spelling skills. By the time pupils are in Years 5 and 6, they are mostly fluent readers and reading has become a pleasure. Pupils' reading logs show detailed reviews of adventure stories, thrillers, historical stories and joke books.
- Marking is regularly scrutinised by senior leaders so that all teachers are aware of the best practice and understand what is expected. As a result, marking is good and provides pupils with thoughtful comments on what to do next to improve, although sometimes it is not simple or clear enough, particularly in writing activities.
- Teachers' planning is detailed and imaginative, providing good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and independently. A small amount of planning does not sufficiently recognise the range of pupils' needs and abilities resulting in activities that are not well enough matched to individual needs.
- Pupils are taught in ability groups in English and mathematics and this has helped teachers and teaching assistants to devote time to helping those pupils with little English to acquire skills at a faster rate. Pupils enjoy these lessons because learning is 'harder' and because, 'You get more help.'
- In some lessons, insufficient emphasis is placed on the importance of forming letters clearly so that writing is neat and legible.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are keen to succeed. They respond enthusiastically to their teachers and co-operate well with each other.
- Almost all pupils know their targets and say they like having them because, 'They make you think.'
- In lessons and around the school pupils behave well. They are courteous and helpful. In whole-school assemblies they contribute enthusiastically and take it in turns to prepare the hall or organise the singing.
- Pupils understand the difference between bullying and falling out. All agree that bullying is extremely rare and if it occurs it is promptly dealt with by staff. A few parents expressed concern about the way the school deals with bullying, but these views were not supported by the views

of pupils, staff or governors.

- Pupils understand the risks associated with alcohol, smoking and the internet, including what to do if they think that they are victims of cyber-bullying. Pupils are well prepared to recognise risks and know how to stay safe.
- The school's emphasis on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has successfully promoted the values of tolerance and respect. This is evident in the way that pupils help each other and play together.
- Attendance has improved because pupils understand the importance of learning and are keen to come to school. Attendance is now average.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher and senior leadership team have changed. The acting headteacher, previously the school's deputy headteacher, has implemented a strong system of performance management closely linked to pupil progress. She has high expectations of all staff and pupils.
- Leadership responsibilities are now distributed more widely and effectively, and there is a strong team ethos and sense of purpose. The school's evaluation of its work is accurate and the leadership know what they need to do to continue to improve standards within the school.
- A good system for tracking pupil progress and attendance is in operation. All staff are aware of the need to accelerate the rate at which pupils learn and make progress; as a result, they set challenging targets and expect the best from all pupils.
- The leadership and management of teaching are good. Senior staff provide excellent models of teaching and subject leadership and share their expertise with other staff so that teaching continues to improve. Excellent support and guidance is provided for newly qualified teachers joining the school so that they rapidly improve their practice. Teachers' pay is closely linked to performance and targets are suitably challenging. Good partnerships with other schools provide staff with beneficial training opportunities.
- The acting headteacher has developed and maintains a good partnership with parents and the school has a wide variety of family learning events like 'Fun for Fathers' and 'Stay and Play' which help parents understand what their children need to do to improve.
- The local authority has provided good support to the school's leadership team and has helped them to improve the quality of school improvement planning so that they can take prompt action to address their priorities.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. It is well managed and good links with agencies are maintained. Pupils' needs and progress are reviewed regularly. The work of teaching assistants is good and contributes significantly to the progress that pupils make.
- The needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those with little or no English are understood. They receive systematic and sustained support so that they rapidly acquire the skills they need to become part of the school community. Information to parents about school events is produced in six languages and a bi-lingual teaching assistant provides good support for children from Romania.

- The pupil premium funding the school receives has been used to reduce class sizes for English and mathematics in Year 3 to Year 6 and provide an additional teaching assistant to support the teaching of literacy skills to Reception and Year 1 pupils.
- The arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils meet requirements. The school carries out the necessary checks on adults to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led and managed; it provides good support and realistic challenge for school leaders because they have a good understand of how well groups of pupils are progressing in relation to others in the school and those nationally. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching across the school and have fully supported the school's leadership in tackling underperformance. All staff, including the acting headteacher, have performance management targets which are linked to pupil progress and school priorities. The governing body monitors the use of additional funds provided through the pupil premium.

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	103647
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	404884

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	204
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rick Leigh
Headteacher	Gill Mulhall (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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