

Highgate Primary Academy

Nicholas Lane, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S63 9AS

Inspection dates 19–20 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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.

- Consistently good teaching and higher expectations have improved pupils' quality of learning and their progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- From the Nursery Year through to the end of Year 6, progress is good. The school has seen a rise in standards in reading, writing and mathematics across the school and improvement continues.
- Teachers have been busy developing better ways for pupils to learn and make progress. They all expect the very best from pupils and are not disappointed by the response.
- Teachers and their assistants work hard and use their good skills to help every pupil to do their best.
- Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well in every lesson. They feel safe and make friends easily, show good regard for each other and staff and are very happy to be helpful around school.
- The Principal and senior leadership team have brought many improvements to the way the school works and they continue to drive improvement relentlessly. Their close checks on every part of the school's operation and on the quality of teaching, and pupils' progress in particular, has had an immediate effect on better outcomes for all pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding because there is not always a high level of challenge and fast pace of learning in lessons.
- The provision for teaching the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is not as well developed as most other parts of the curriculum. The school lacks some up-to-date equipment to do so. Pupils' progress is slower in this subject as a result.
- A small number of pupils are frequently late for school and miss part of the reading and writing lessons and this slows their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons which involved all of the school’s 10 teachers. The Principal joined inspectors in observing two lessons.
- Inspectors held discussions with pupils, staff, a member of the governing body, a representative of the Navigate Academies Trust and two members of the parents’ council.
- They scrutinised a wide range of documents held by the school including its self-evaluation, policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils, data on pupils’ progress and the quality of writing and mathematics in a sample of their workbooks.
- There were too few responses to Ofsted’s on-line questionnaire (Parent View) for inspectors to be able to access them. Account was taken of surveys done by the school of parents’ views and also the views of parent council representatives.

Inspection team

Alan Lemon, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

David Halford

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils being supported with additional funding provided through the pupil premium is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average and the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics.
- The Principal was appointed in September 2011.
- The school converted to become an academy in September 2012. Its sponsor is the Navigate Academies Trust.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by ensuring the pace of learning in all lessons is fast and pupils are being challenged to the utmost so that they make outstanding progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching and resources for ICT by:
 - developing detailed plans for teaching the subject and for the use of its resources to support learning in other subjects
 - investing in additional ICT equipment so that it is accessible to all pupils across the school.
- Make sure that the small number of pupils who frequently arrive late to school improve their punctuality and get to their reading and writing lessons on time each day.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils across the school are achieving higher standards of reading, writing and mathematics because the new Principal knows that pupils are capable of achieving more and has successfully raised staff expectations.
- The large majority of children come into the Nursery with skills below those expected for their age and many are well below the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and in personal development. By the end of Reception Year, as a result of recent significant strengthening of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision, children now make good progress and achieve a good level of development in all areas of learning.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress. High expectations of what pupils can achieve are raising standards. Pupils are working at similar levels to those expected nationally in reading, writing and mathematics and this represents good progress.
- Between Years 3 and 6 pupils are also making good progress from their starting previous points. Many are on track to achieve average standards in English and mathematics this year. At present, nearly all pupils are making at least the progress expected and many are making better progress, although the proportion doing so is not yet outstanding.
- The regular check kept on each pupil's performance and the challenging targets they have to achieve ensures every pupil is progressing well. Pupils have developed a good capacity to evaluate their own success and that of each other which has sharpened their focus on learning.
- A new and effective approach to teaching reading and writing has had a significant impact on pupils' learning and progress. From the Nursery onwards pupils develop a secure grasp of letters and sounds, gain confidence, and apply their skills effectively in reading words. Good opportunities for reading frequently in school means many pupils come to love books for their exciting stories and useful information. However, a small number of pupils frequently arrive late to school and miss important opportunities to learn and make progress during reading and writing sessions at the start of each day.
- The good opportunities the youngest pupils have to practise and form recognisable letters leads over time to high quality handwriting. Pupils take great pride in the appearance of their writing. They put well-considered thoughts and observations on paper using interesting language which is accurately spelled and punctuated.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects but there are too few for them to use their ICT skills. ICT resources are only now beginning to be improved. There were too few occasions when computers were used to increase the pace of learning, including in other curriculum subjects, for example, in mathematics when pupils were making bar charts and pie graphs from surveys they had carried out.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers and make better progress than similar pupils in most other schools. The positive impact of the wise spending of the pupil premium funding means that the pupils being supported through these extra funds, including those known to be eligible for a free school meal reach broadly average standards in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The close attention given by leaders to teaching has improved its quality and ensured that it is good. While some is outstanding, the quality of teaching is not yet improved enough to be outstanding overall. Across the school, teachers use effective approaches to promote good learning and progress. Teaching is lively and the pace of learning is good. This makes many lessons interesting and enjoyable. Where teaching is outstanding, the pace of lessons is particularly rapid and pupils' work is extremely challenging. However, this level of pace and challenge in lessons are not consistently evident in all lessons.

- Teachers and their classroom assistants know pupils well. Information from accurate assessments of what pupils have already learnt is used effectively to set work which matches each pupil's abilities and extends what they know and can do. This provision is a strong feature in the outstanding lessons observed and led to pupils being challenged as much as they could be. In one mathematics lesson, while most pupils were progressing well in multiplying numbers in the tens by a single number, the few who were quick to master this process were challenged to work out by themselves how to multiply numbers in the hundreds, by numbers in the tens, which they succeeded in doing.
- In every classroom, expectations are high and this leads to pupils working hard, being productive and taking considerable care in presenting their work. Teachers are consistent in making it clear to pupils what they must achieve in each lesson, setting them targets and marking their work. Pupils are given good advice on how to improve and have regular opportunities to say what they think they have done well or could do better.
- Good teaching is a significant feature of the well-planned provision for children in the Nursery and Reception Years. Staff provide children with a wide variety of work and activities which promoting effective learning through play and teaching them the knowledge and skills they need for Year 1. Children's communication and literacy skills are taught expertly and opportunities to develop these run through all of the children's activities.
- Teaching assistants' skills are developed well. They bring good expertise to supporting learning during lessons as well as when they take small groups of pupils out of the class who need extra help with reading and writing. The good team work of teachers and their assistants ensures support for pupils is well-planned so those making slower progress and those who have greater difficulty learning than most are helped to catch up with the others.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and always start work ready to engage with teachers and to contribute to the lesson. Their interest in learning and willingness to cooperate and work hard is seen across the school from the youngest to the oldest pupils. A small group of Reception children getting extra help with writing were really keen to get on with their work and did not waste a second in practising their handwriting. Pupils enjoy the frequent opportunities to work together, help each other and to tackle problems by themselves.
- The staff make a significant contribution to pupils developing good personal qualities. Pupils appreciate and adhere to the school's clearly stated values. As a result, they show respect and have positive regard for each other which extends to how they treat people with cultures and beliefs different from their own. Staff manage behaviour effectively and very occasionally it is necessary to do so in order to keep one or two pupils on task in lessons.
- Pupils get on well with each other which helps to ensure behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and that pupils feel safe. There is a good awareness among pupils about keeping safe and they know the different ways in which they might be bullied by others. However, pupils and staff are very clear on where they stand in tackling and eliminating bullying with the result that it is a rare occurrence.
- Pupils' attendance is average for a primary school and has been improving. The school tackles absences robustly, especially through the good working relationship being developed with parents. However, the progress of a very small number of pupils arrive late to school is slowed because they miss some of the literacy lesson which takes place at the start of every day.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal's impact on the school has been very effective in creating a good school. It has good capability to sustain the fast rate of improvement. The school's improvement is driven effectively by the senior leadership team which has given the school its vision of excellence, set high expectations and have taken the staff with them.

- Leaders' ambition and determination to achieve high standards demonstrate the strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity. They ensure a rigorous application of safeguarding procedures. Leaders have been effective in engaging parents and increasing their interest and involvement in their children's learning. The parent council makes a good link between school and parents and this has led to several successful events improving parents' understanding of the school's aims and values.
- Leaders have had a significant impact on improving the quality of teaching through rigorous checking in lessons and of pupils' progress. A range of effective steps are taken to develop teachers' skills with opportunities for them to see outstanding practice, receive coaching on good methods for promoting learning and by taking part in regular reviews of teaching and pupils' progress.
- All of these steps give rigour to the school's formal system for improving teachers' performance. Through this process the expectations and targets set for each teacher focus sharply on raising pupils' achievement and are firmly linked to the school's improvement priorities. The challenge of this process is well aligned to each teacher's level of responsibility and experience.
- The school is strongly supported by the Navigate Academies Trust in making links with its other academies. Its expert review of the school's effectiveness contributes significantly towards identifying the correct priorities for improvement set out in the current development plan.
- The curriculum is highly effective in promoting literacy and numeracy. However, leaders have not yet ensured that the curriculum provides enough opportunities for pupils to develop their ICT skills, including in other curriculum subjects. This is because there are not enough ICT resources for all pupils to access across the school and because detailed plans for teaching the subject are yet to be fully established. Teachers are currently developing further work to ensure that the subjects taught are better related to pupils' interests. The curriculum is effective in promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision for in the Early Years Foundation Stage is particularly strong and the arrangements made for learning outside are outstanding.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are highly committed to the improvement and success of the school. Through their own experience and expertise, as well because of the training undertaken, they ably hold the school to account. They give close attention to the detailed information the school's provides on pupils' progress and the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching. Governors are very firm in not tolerating any underachievement or sub-standard teaching and have played a significant part in driving the school's rapid improvement. They look closely and critically at data to reassure themselves that all groups of pupils are progressing well. They also make sure that the school's management of teachers' performance shows that teaching is improving and raising pupils' achievement. They receive a detailed and accurate report on the effect of spending the pupil premium which shows how it is improving pupils' results.

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	138701
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	409484

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Rydelewski
Headteacher	Jo Leishman
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01709 892160
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