

Hurst Green Primary School

Narrow Lane, Halesowen, B62 9NZ

Inspection dates 2–3 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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 enjoy their learning. Levels of attainment are above average at Key Stage 1 and are now returning to their previous above-average levels at Key Stage 2, as are rates of progress.
- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and develop good learning and listening skills.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well because of the well-targeted support that they receive.
- Teaching is consistently good and some is outstanding. Teachers plan active tasks that are well matched to pupils' individual abilities.
- Pupils behave well and are quick to respond to teachers' instructions. They are polite and welcoming to visitors. They say that the school keeps them safe and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe including when using the internet.
- The new headteacher, well supported by the leadership team and governors, has quickly established her vision for the school. Strong processes are in place to keep teaching at a high quality and to establish high expectations for behaviour. Leaders' well-focused actions mean that pupils' achievement is now improving.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers occasionally spend too long introducing the main task for the lesson and the pace of learning then slows.
- Although teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately, they do not always make sure pupils understand their targets and what they need to do to achieve them.
- Although leaders now collect a wide range of information about the performance of pupils, the use of this data to target areas of underachievement lacks precision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons, four of which were jointly observed with one of the school's senior leaders. They also made a number of further short visits to lessons.
- Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body, parents and carers, the school's external improvement partner and staff, including year group leaders. A phone call took place with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at policies, self-evaluation and development planning, monitoring records, information about pupils' progress, safeguarding documents, and samples of pupils' work.
- The views of the 37 parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken into account. Inspectors also took account of 36 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mary Davis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Suha Ahmad

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average with the largest groups being of Indian and Pakistani origin. A below average proportion speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after pupils, those known to be eligible for free school meals and pupils who have a parent in the armed forces) is below average.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- In the past two years the school has experienced staffing changes due to a number of teachers retiring. The headteacher took up post in January 2013 and is supported by a new senior team.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers consistently provide clear written feedback on pupils' work so that they know what to do to reach and exceed their targets, providing opportunities for them to respond to the advice given, so that they can take responsibility for their own progress
 - teachers quickly move pupils to the main task for each lesson as soon as they identify that pupils understand what to do, so that they are fully and actively involved in their learning.
- Make sure that the improved range of data collected by the school on pupils' performance is always used effectively to target areas for improvement with precision, in order to accelerate progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join Reception from a wide range of pre-school settings, with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically in line with the levels expected for their age. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage, developing good learning and listening skills, preparing them well for Key Stage 1.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils continue to make good progress. Attainment has been consistently well above average in writing and mathematics and attainment in reading is also now above average after a slight dip in 2012.
- In 2012 the results of Key Stage 2 national tests dipped to average. Leaders have carefully analysed this fall in achievement, most notably in mathematics, and tackled all elements of underachievement. As a result, the current Year 6 pupils have reached high levels of attainment in English and mathematics, with an increased proportion attaining Level 6. There is no significant difference between the achievements of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.
- Leaders' robust tracking of progress across the school indicates that the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected rates of progress compares favourably with pupils nationally.
- All pupils enjoy reading. From the start children learn how to sound out words. Systematic support to develop reading continues through Key Stage 1 with extra support provided in Key Stage 2 if needed. Some of this support is provided by parents and carers, who act as reading buddies. The Year 1 screening check shows an above-average proportion of pupils reaching the expected level. By Year 6, almost all are reaching or exceeding expected attainment levels in reading.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress as a result of the support they receive and their attainment is above average for this group. Good support from teaching assistants in lessons enables them to be fully included. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language are similarly well supported and achieve well.
- In 2012 the gap between the attainment of those receiving the pupil premium and their classmates had widened. These pupils were a year behind in English and mathematics. Although this group of pupils made better progress than their classmates in English, their progress in mathematics was much slower. The school has tackled this rigorously during the current year and there is now no gap in performance between eligible pupils and their peers. This shows the effective use of the additional funding on one-to-one tuition and small-group support.
- Pupils say that lessons are fun and that they often take responsibility for their own learning. For example, in an outstanding English lesson they worked independently in small groups, enthusiastically taking the role of journalists, using computer notepads to research their chosen stories. Here they used steps for success that they had identified themselves, enabling them to check their own work to see that all elements were included.

The quality of teaching is good

- All teachers plan well to make sure that tasks match the wide range of abilities in each class so that all pupils are appropriately challenged and supported.

- Teachers consistently make sure that tasks are relevant to pupils' experience. For example, during the inspection, many classes were undertaking activities connected with the emergency services. In mathematics, Year 5 were observed calculating how many fully equipped ambulances or fire-engines they could buy with a set budget, while in English they wrote a newspaper report on a recent local fire. In both these lessons there was a buzz of excitement as pupils discussed their work together.
- Good teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage promotes enjoyment of learning. Children develop their social and language skills through play and make good progress. This is particularly seen in the high quality reading sessions that enable children systematically to build their skills.
- In the best lessons, teachers use questioning effectively to encourage pupils to think and to justify their answers. This enables teachers to identify and address common misconceptions quickly, often using pupils to explain to each other their method of working.
- Teachers enable learning to build progressively during lessons, first making sure that pupils have the skills needed for the task by practising small exercises. For example, in a Year 6 English lesson, pupils practised how to change direct speech to indirect speech in preparation for their newspaper report. However, a minority of teachers spend too long explaining the task and so pupils sit passively for too long before they can begin their activity.
- Although teachers mark work regularly, there is some inconsistency. Some pupils are unclear about what they need to do to achieve a particular level or how to meet their targets. Opportunities are also sometimes missed to encourage pupils to respond to advice by practising skills or undertaking a new challenge.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour in lessons is good and often exemplary. The new leaders have been quick to establish their high expectations of how pupils should behave and make sure that staff are consistent in their management of behaviour. A 'Tree of Choices' is displayed in every classroom making it clear that pupils should take responsibility for their own behaviour and choose to show respect for others. As a result, pupils told inspectors that behaviour has improved and that their learning is rarely disrupted.
 - Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors and are confident to express their views. They told inspectors that the very few who have behaviour difficulties are managed well by adults. These pupils have been a clear focus for leaders in promoting a calm environment and a variety of strategies have been employed to make sure that their behaviour has improved.
 - Pupils told inspectors that, although there have been incidents of bullying, that these are rare, firmly dealt with and that adults will not tolerate any racism. They have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and say that most adults will support them well should they need it.
 - There is a strong focus on safety throughout the school. In a physical education lesson in Reception, children were not only told the rules for safe use of the equipment, but also it was explained why those rules were needed in order not to hurt themselves.
 - Parents and carers, staff and pupils agree that the school keeps them safe and that behaviour is good, although a few voiced concerns about the behaviour of a very few pupils.
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- Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school, and persistent absence rates are reducing.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher is well supported by her new senior leaders and they work together as an effective team. They have a clear understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development and have quickly identified priorities to take the school forward. Their actions have already had an impact by improving behaviour and raising achievement.
- All leaders are involved in robust systems for checking on all aspects of teaching. This information is used to identify whole-school issues and additional training that is needed. Teachers are held to account through meetings about pupils' progress and the setting of targets for the management of teachers' performance. As a result, there is a high level of consistent practice across the school.
- Teachers are keen to improve their practice and appropriate training is provided to enable them to develop their skills further. Teachers new to the profession are well supported and leaders' checking shows that they have improved.
- The range of subjects pupils study enables a good focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to the effective literacy scheme, outstanding support is provided to promote pupils' numeracy skills, particularly those of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support.
- Many exciting experiences are offered to enrich pupils' learning, including in art, shown by the variety of excellent art displays around the school. Parents and carers are frequently used to share their expertise. For example, during the inspection, Year 4 pupils enjoyed tasting Greek food and learning about other aspects of Greek culture from a parent. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through such activities. These also include opportunities to reflect about issues that affect them in assemblies and the strong focus on teamwork in lessons.
- The school engages very well with parents and carers, involving them fully in the life of the school. Parents and carers say that they are well informed and welcomed into the school and particularly value the workshops provided that enable them to support their child's learning. Reading diaries are particularly effective in forging links between home and school, as are the opportunities for pupils to work with their parents and carers on creative homework projects.
- Robust systems are in place for tracking pupils' progress and for tackling any areas of underachievement. Leaders know the pupils well as individuals and make sure that all are fully included and have an equal opportunity to achieve. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Leaders collect a wide range of performance data but the use of this information to target areas for improvement and to accelerate progress further lacks precision.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well qualified and has a good understanding of the issues facing the school. Governors benefit from regular training, including in performance data, so that they are able to compare the school's performance with schools nationally. They know the school's strengths and areas for development well and have taken an active role in making sure that

achievement has risen, providing appropriate challenge and support. They take an increasingly active role in the school including visiting lessons. They are fully aware of the spending of the pupil premium and check its impact on raising the achievement of the pupils it supports. They have made sure that the management of financial resources is effective and that safeguarding procedures and practice are exemplary. They know about how the school manages teachers' performance, including that of the headteacher, how it rewards good teachers and tackles any underperformance.

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	103807
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	411940

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	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Bingham
Headteacher	Julia Bathurst
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
Telephone number	01384 818210
Fax number	01384 818211
Email address	info@hurst-green.dudley.sch.uk

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