

Heathfield Primary School

Heathfield Road, Birmingham, B19 1HJ

Inspection dates

28–29 November 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement at the end of Year 6 and Year 2 in 2013 was well below expected levels.
- Although teaching has improved considerably this year, it has not been effective enough over time to ensure that pupils make sustained good progress and achieve well.
- The pace of learning in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) lessons is sometimes too slow and teachers do not always give pupils time to practise new sounds.
- Increasingly, lessons are interesting and excite pupils' thinking, but teachers do not always make the best use of questions to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Despite some excellent practice in marking and feedback for older pupils, comments do not provide clear guidance to help younger pupils improve their work.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because lessons do not always develop children's skills in a logical sequence and routines are not fully established to make sure all children are purposefully engaged in learning.
- The way pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are catered for is not well organised, and their parents do not receive enough information about their children's needs or the support they receive.
- Governance, though improving, has been ineffective. While focusing on federating with another school, the governing body has not gained a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school or held senior leaders sufficiently to account for its underperformance.

The school has the following strengths

- The new leadership team have taken decisive action to improve the quality of teaching and learning experiences for pupils. As a result, progress is improving rapidly for all groups, including the most able pupils.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils behave consistently well. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and are eager to learn. They are provided with stimulating play activities at lunchtime which provide excellent opportunities for social development.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, 14 of which were seen together with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made other short visits to lessons and to learning areas in their course of their observations of pupils' learning. They also listened to pupils read.
- Inspectors observed senior leaders reporting back to teachers on the quality of their teaching.
- Inspectors took account of the 11 responses to the online Parent View survey and spoke informally to parents and carers as they brought pupils to school.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, representatives from the local authority, governors, senior and subject leaders, and teaching staff.
- The information from 38 staff questionnaires was considered.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school, and looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including the school's own data and monitoring of how well pupils make progress. They also checked planning documents, records of checks on the quality of teaching, and records of behaviour, attendance and punctuality, as well as documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Simon Blackburn, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gwendoline Onyon

Additional Inspector

Judith Tulloch

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- All the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost all are thought to speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority, eligible for free school meals or from a family with a parent in the armed services, is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average, but the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- As a result of a local authority review of the school in February 2013 that found serious shortcomings in the achievement of pupils and in leadership and management practices, the headteacher of a neighbouring school was asked to take interim leadership of this school. At the end of October 2013, the governors of Heathfield School and Prince Albert School agreed to form a federation that will take effect from 1 February 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
 - all pupils, and particularly the most able, are stretched by the questions they receive and made to think more deeply about their work
 - the excellent written feedback seen in books in Years 5 and 6 is replicated by all teachers so that pupils know precisely what they need to do to improve their work
 - the teaching of phonics lessons is brisk and give pupils opportunities to practise their sounds.
- Improve the quality of teaching in the Reception classes by ensuring that:
 - activities systematically develop children's skills
 - clear routines are established to make sure that all children are purposefully engaged in learning.
- Improve the support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs by:
 - giving teachers and teaching assistants greater access to a fully qualified specialist in special educational needs to help their planning
 - improving the quality and frequency of communication with parents about their children's needs and the support they are receiving
 - training all teaching assistants to the highest standard and deploying them effectively so their support challenges pupils to reach the highest possible levels of achievement.
- Make leadership and management more effective by training governors so they have the skills they need to understand data and rigorously challenge leaders over the quality of teaching and learning.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The Year 6 national test results in 2013 were well below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils who had made the expected progress since Year 2 in writing and mathematics was also below average. Nevertheless, the results also reflected a significant improvement in rates of progress that occurred from February 2013 until the pupils took their tests in May. Progress in reading was broadly average.
- The local authority review indicated that the apparently much better test and teacher assessment results from previous years are not considered to be reliable, so no conclusions about trends in attainment and progress can be drawn.
- Most children start school with skills that are below those typically expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery because they have well-planned and sequenced activities that allow them to develop well.
- Children start Reception with skills which are also below those typically expected for their age and a high proportion speak English as an additional language. They make progress which is similar to that expected of children nationally. However, it is not rapid enough to make up for the gaps in their learning, and when pupils start in Key Stage 1 their skills in reading, writing and mathematics are still below those expected for their age.
- Pupils who completed Year 2 in 2013 reached standards that were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This indicates that there was poor teaching. This has now been significantly improved. Lesson observations in Years 1 and 2 show that pupils are now making much better progress. This is supported by the work in their books, which shows their ability to improve their writing and to use their mathematical skills in new situations.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to read in many different situations and for different purposes. Many now read well, and are good at breaking words down into their individual sounds and then blending them together to make sense of the text. Pupils are enthusiastic readers and the more-able pupils retell stories confidently and articulately.
- School data for pupils currently in Year 6 show that they are making very rapid progress in all areas of their learning. In some of the lessons observed in Year 6 during the inspection, pupils made outstanding progress. In one English lesson, the teacher set very high standards for all the pupils in the class and an expectation that they would have to clearly explain their thinking using high-quality technical language – a challenge the pupils were keen to meet.
- Those pupils eligible for the pupil premium make at least as much progress in Key Stage 2 as other pupils. As a result, the gap between how well this group of pupils are doing and others in the school has been closed. Overall, Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals reached slightly higher standards in English and mathematics than their classmates in 2013, though their standards were still below similar pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making accelerated progress in Year 6 and good progress in other year groups. This is because their needs are now being identified and assessed accurately and these needs are being met sensitively in the classroom.
- The 2013 results show that more-able pupils made better progress than others between Year 2

and Year 6. Evidence from pupils' books and from discussions with pupils indicates this is continuing, with challenging tasks being set that make more-able pupils think deeply about their work.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching in the school is improving strongly, there is still too much variation across year groups and classes. The majority of the teaching seen during the inspection was good or better but there are still too many lessons where pupils could be challenged more effectively to reach higher standards.
- In the Reception class, children make progress in developing their skills and aptitudes but their learning is not always planned in a logical sequence that takes account of what they can already do and the steps they need to take next. Children who are not directly involved in learning with an adult enjoy the stimulating environment, both indoors and outdoors, but do not have routines established to make sure that they are always engaged in purposeful learning. As a result, their attention can drift and the noise level can rise.
- The teaching of phonics is not consistently effective across Reception and Years 1 and 2. In some lessons, the pace of learning is not rapid enough and pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise the sounds being taught. As a result, progress slows and some pupils do not gain fluency before moving on to new sounds.
- Teachers' use of questioning varies across the school. Some teachers challenge pupils very effectively by making sure that the most able pupils get the hardest questions and using follow-up questions to probe their understanding more deeply. In some lessons, questioning is less successful because pupils are not given enough time to answer, or the question only needs a single word in response.
- Inspectors saw example of excellent written feedback in pupils' books, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In these books, work was marked extremely thoroughly and the teacher was very precise about what needed to improve. The 'Heathfield Quality Marking' form was used consistently in these books to give pupils more challenging problems or corrections which they then completed. In other year groups, marking is regular and frequent but the same levels of challenge and response from pupils are not always present.
- The learning tasks set for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensure that they make good progress in many lessons, and teachers and teaching assistants work well together to make sure pupils' needs are met. In some lessons, however, supported pupils are not challenged sufficiently to use their own initiative and do not have enough direct input from their teacher.
- Pupils' language needs are supported well throughout the school by adults who speak their first language. In the Nursery class, adults skilfully develop pupils' English through a range of activities and by carefully using a mix of English and home language, ensuring that children have full access to the learning.
- Homework is regular and very well appreciated by the pupils. Parents are asked to help their children with their homework and to comment on whether it is hard enough, so it can be constantly updated to challenge pupils. Pupils also recognise that the quality of teaching has improved over the last year and can identify changes like more opportunities to assess each

other's work, success criteria for lessons and better marking of their work.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The rapid progress seen in lessons and books is helped considerably by the very positive attitudes that pupils have to their learning. They are keen to learn and are both curious and hardworking. In lessons, they make themselves ready very quickly, anticipate changes in activity and discuss and debate in groups with enthusiasm. Relationships with adults are extremely productive and pupils follow instructions readily, ensuring that learning moves forward at a good pace.
- There is a strong feeling of purposeful learning in the school, and the pupils' approach to their lessons reflects this. Low-level disruption is very rare according to pupils, and inspectors only recorded any lack of concentration when the teaching failed to maintain pupils' interest. The school is a clean and tidy, and pupils contribute to this with clearly established routines for tidying and organising at the end of lessons.
- The school keeps careful records of all bullying and behavioural incidents and analyses any patterns to successfully intervene and maintain good behaviour over time. Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and are taught how to stay safe in assemblies and through special activities like anti-bullying week. As a result, they say that bullying is rare and is dealt with well by the school.
- A group of older pupils act as peer mediators, taking responsibility for behaviour. They are identified by special red sweatshirts that allow other pupils to seek them out if they have a conflict. Inspectors observed a group of mediators seeking assistance from the learning mentor when their initial efforts to solve a problem had 'not led to a resolution'.
- Lunchtimes are vibrant and active on the school playground. Leaders are phasing out lunchtime supervisors and replacing them with pastoral and play leaders who lead games and activities. Called 'Green Peas' because of their green sweatshirts, they provide a vital bridge to the community, excellent experience of work for aspiring young people, good role models for the pupils and massive enthusiasm and energy.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say the improvements in behaviour and safety over the last year have made them feel even safer.
- Attendance is improving but still remains below the national average. The school recognises the issue and has introduced incentive schemes to improve attendance. Leaders and managers monitor attendance rigorously and analyse attendance by different groups. The main thrust of current initiatives is to reduce the number of extended holidays taken.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The current leadership team, introduced in February 2013 and strengthened in September 2013, has had a profound impact on the school, rapidly improving teaching and driving up the standard of pupils' work. However, the changes are still quite recent and some areas of leadership still require improvement so that they can have the maximum impact.
- The school does not have its own dedicated leader responsible for special educational needs but shares this post with the school with which it is federated. While statutory requirements are met, teachers and teaching assistants do not get all the support they need to ensure that pupils make

the very best progress they can. Parents are also concerned that they do not get enough information about the support offered to their children or an opportunity to meet with a specialist on their child's needs.

- The executive headteacher and head of school provide strong and committed leadership that is generally welcomed by the staff, although some staff have concerns about the pace of change. They focus sharply on improving the quality of teaching and have strengthened the leadership team with the appointment of two assistant headteachers who lead and manage the upper and lower schools. These middle leaders, along with senior leaders, make regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work, and use the results to make sure that support is given to help teachers improve. As a result of leaders' improved monitoring, assessments throughout the school are now much more reliable.
- The formal system for managing staff performance is rigorous and sets challenging targets for teachers. School improvement plans identify appropriate priorities and provide detailed steps for their successful implementation.
- Senior leaders regularly analyse information about pupils' progress to identify the weaknesses of individuals and groups of pupils. They are aware of the differences in achievement of different groups in the school and are using this information to provide extra help where it is needed. They carefully check the impact of the pupil premium spending to ensure that any gaps in attainment and progress of eligible pupils are closing. The extra funding provides a learning mentor, additional classroom support and small-group teaching.
- The curriculum helps pupils to develop basic skills and broaden their knowledge of their world. Senior leaders have placed a great emphasis on improving skills in reading, writing and mathematics since joining the school in February. The assistant headteachers are leading all subjects beyond English, mathematics and science. This means that fewer staff are gaining experience of leadership in this phase of the school's development.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils enjoy many visits, speakers and cultural opportunities and leaders ensure that there is a thorough programme of work for pupils to extend their understanding of discrimination.
- The school recently received notification of its primary school sports funding. It has made appropriate plans to employ a specialist sports coach who can train staff and increase the availability of after-school sports activities.
- Leaders are working to gain the trust and confidence of parents after the sudden and rapid changes that took place earlier in the year. Parents who spoke to the inspection team had mixed views about the way new procedures were being applied, but most recognise improvements in the pace of their children's learning. Only about half of the respondents to Parent View feel that the school is led and managed well.
- Leaders make sure that safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.
- The local authority provided very little support to the school while it was outstanding. It stepped in decisively when alerted to the decline in standards and acted swiftly to install new leadership to secure much-needed improvements. It has not supported governors appropriately since then by clarifying precisely how their leadership needs to be developed.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Following the local authority review of governance in March 2013, new members were brought in to strengthen the governing body's ability to hold the school to account. Since this time, governors have been engaged in preparations for federation, which was finally agreed in November this year. Governors have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but do not yet have the necessary skills to use all available information to hold school leaders to account. They know the school did not perform well in the assessments in 2013 and are anxious to pursue solutions to improve outcomes for pupils. They have had little input into the strategic direction of the school or the allocation of additional funding, such as the pupil premium. They have otherwise maintained reasonable management of the school budget and have a working understanding of how teaching is being improved, but without a detailed knowledge of the performance management system.

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	103329
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	427118

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	470
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Mogridge
Headteacher	Sajid Gulzar
Date of previous school inspection	28 April 2009
Telephone number	0121 464 6474
Fax number	0121 464 4413
Email address	enquiry@heathfld.bham.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

