

The Hall School

Glenfield Frith Drive, Glenfield, Leicester, LE3 8PQ

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2014

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 make good progress from their below average starting points.
- Despite a dip in the 2013 results in Key Stage 1, good achievement has been maintained since the last inspection. A greater proportion of pupils than seen previously now reach or exceed the level expected for their age at the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers have high expectations and usually provide work that is well matched to pupils' varying abilities, and activities that pupils find motivating and challenging.
- Pupils behave well, have very positive attitudes and attend school regularly.
- The school has good arrangements to keep pupils safe.
- The subjects taught provide a particularly strong emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. This, along with pupils' good behaviour, attitudes to learning and strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, ensures that they are well prepared for the future.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership. The drive, ambition and clear direction from all leaders have been key factors in building on the strengths of teaching and achievement reported by the last inspection.
- Governors provide good support, are well informed about the school's performance. They hold leaders and managers rigorously to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently at the high standard in Key Stage 1 as seen throughout Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' marking does not always tell pupils how to improve their work, and teachers do not check that pupils act on the advice they are given.
- Pupils' progress is hampered when they wait too long for the teacher's help, or are given too much information and do not have opportunities to find things out for themselves.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons, of which three were seen jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also made short visits to nine small-group sessions taken by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Meetings were held with staff, two groups of pupils and two members of the governing body. Inspectors attended three school assemblies. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 91 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They held conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 44 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including the school’s own data on pupils’ current progress, records of governing body meetings, and records relating to teachers’ performance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. The way disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are catered for was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jeremy Frank

Additional Inspector

Jean Whalley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The Hall Primary is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It has two classes in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- Most pupils are White British. Slightly fewer pupils are from minority ethnic or mixed heritage backgrounds than seen nationally. A very small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government for certain groups, such as pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- In 2013, the governors appointed a new leader for Years 3 and 4, and two newly qualified teachers to cover maternity leave for two teachers in Reception and Year 2. Two teachers returned from maternity leave in January 2014.
- New pre-school provision, managed by the governing body, opened in September 2013. It did not form part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and pupils' progress accelerates, particularly in Key Stage 1, by making sure that:
 - teachers check pupils' understanding during lessons and adjust their teaching where necessary to ensure that everyone makes the very best progress
 - pupils have the opportunity to find things out for themselves
 - marking gives pupils clear guidance on how they can improve their work and teachers make sure that pupils act on the advice given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is rising steadily because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. The dip seen in Key Stage 1 attainment in 2013 has been eradicated due to leaders' concerted and effective actions, including thorough checks on pupils' progress. Any pupil at risk of falling behind receives timely and effective support to accelerate their learning.
- Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding below the levels typically expected for their age. Learning gets off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children learn early literacy, numeracy and physical skills at a good rate because they use these every day in a wide range of purposeful indoor and outdoor activities.
- Pupils make especially strong progress in reading from Reception onwards because the regular teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) helps to ensure that their basic reading skills are well grounded. Pupils in Year 1 last year and now in Year 2, achieved well above-average scores in the national reading check in 2013.
- Inspection evidence and the school's information show that pupils are on track to achieve much higher attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading than seen previously. Older pupils read widely and develop their reading skills faster than the expected rate. They are confident and fluent readers who take pleasure in choosing and enjoying books. Attainment in reading is above average in Year 6.
- Attainment in writing is improving. Pupils make marks from an early age and build their skills with confidence as they write for different purposes and for a wide range of audiences. Pupils' handwriting is well developed and work is neatly presented. The local authority's analysis of the 2013 teacher assessment of writing indicate that some assessments were too harsh, especially since the school's outcomes in the new tests for spelling, punctuation and English grammar were above the national average.
- Good progress is maintained throughout the school for all groups of pupils in mathematics. National test data confirms that the proportions of pupils making the expected rate, or more than the expected rate of progress, are higher than average. However, not as many pupils are making as rapid progress in mathematics as they are in reading and writing. Pupils are generally set challenges that they find interesting, but there are occasions when some are given sums that are too easy for them, particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Pupils currently supported through the pupil premium funding make progress which is often better than that of their classmates. In 2013, eligible pupils in Year 6 were two terms behind their classmates in reading and writing and three terms behind in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, make good progress from their differing starting points. This is because of the good additional support they receive from knowledgeable teaching assistants. This is also the case for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English, who make equally good progress. The most-able pupils are usually provided with the right level of challenge to help them make good progress. For example, some Year 6 pupils are taught English and mathematics in a booster group aiming to achieve the higher levels in the national tests.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall and sometimes outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2, and leads to pupils' quickening progress. Senior leaders provide particularly good role models and set high standards of practice. The very strong focus now placed on teaching pupils the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy is helping to raise attainment.
- Highly effective teaching in Reception enables children to make good progress. Accurate assessment helps adults plan appropriately for children's next steps in learning. Children are helped to think about what they are learning and to develop confidence in working on their own as well as collaborating with others. Children are happy, get on well with each other and enjoy finding things out for themselves.
- Most teachers have good subject knowledge and their expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. Assessments of what pupils know and can do are now regular and accurate, although the local authority last year found that pupils' writing was sometimes better than teachers had graded it. This information from assessment is used well to plan stimulating learning tasks that are closely suited to pupils' different abilities. As a result, progress for most pupils is rapid. Lessons move at good pace and the activities provided are motivating and challenging.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners who give of their best even on the rare occasions when lessons do not capture their interest throughout.
- Teachers use a variety of exciting and creative approaches to meet and respond to pupils' different learning needs, including those of the more able. For example, in Year 6, pupils were using the language of cause and effect to improve their skills in writing. After watching a clip from the film, *Wallace and Gromit*, pupils successfully used adverbs and connectives in complex sentences. The more able were inspired and demonstrated their sophisticated use of language, which was advanced for their age, linked to learning about sentence structure and humour in language.
- In lessons where the most effective learning takes place, teachers continually encourage pupils to find out things for themselves. They ask probing questions that make pupils think deeply. For example, in a Year 4 history lesson, pupils were looking at the factors affecting the marriage of Anne of Cleves to Henry VIII. A pupil acted out the part of Anne of Cleves, which engrossed the other pupils, and good questioning from the teacher and opportunities to discuss the issues with partners resulted in pupils' deeper knowledge and understanding. Pupils clearly benefit from such approaches, which, in this instance, led on to pupils writing at length about what they had learned.
- Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they support pupils with special educational needs in working toward their personal targets. They carry out clear roles and responsibilities with great skill and give high-quality support to pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English.
- In some lessons, teachers do not check often enough on how well pupils are getting on and this means that pupils do not know what to do when they get stuck. This slows their progress.
- Occasionally, pupils are not able to move their learning on at a quicker pace because whole-class activities take too long to introduce or complete. This is more often the case in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. For example, in a Key Stage 1 lesson, more-able pupils were clear about what made Florence Nightingale famous but had to mark time while the teacher made sure that the whole class understood this before they could get on with the tasks they had been set.

- There is much good marking, but some teachers do not give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work because comments are too generalised. Teachers do not check that pupils follow the advice they are given, which means that pupils sometimes repeat the same mistakes.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Attitudes to learning in lessons are consistently positive. This is because teaching is good and makes sure that pupils are challenged and motivated to do well.
- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around school, such as lunchtimes in the dinner hall. They are polite and respectful, whether they are with a teaching assistant, class teacher or in assembly. The vast majority appear neatly dressed in the school uniform, valuing their position of belonging to the school community. They clearly understand and uphold the school's behaviour policy.
- Pupils are very proud of their school and relished the opportunity to contribute to the design of the quiet reading area and the recent additions to the school buildings. Older pupils play their part in helping others, fulfilling roles such as 'I am your friend' and playing with younger children in the Reception playground at lunchtime.
- Pupils listen attentively. They respond rapidly to adults' instructions and play a full and active part in lessons. Occasionally, a few pupils are more passive, such as in lessons where they are not given enough opportunities to work on their own or at a pace that suits them.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe, and know how to keep themselves and each other safe. Pupils know the fire drill procedure as well as the steps to take if a fire started at home because the fire brigade have spoken to them about this. Pupils know about how to keep themselves safe if a stranger approaches them. They are very aware of the potential dangers of internet use. This is because they have received effective teaching on this from the school.
- Pupils are adamant that there is no bullying. They have a deep understanding of the different forms of bullying and are confident that if any should occur it would be dealt with promptly.
- Pupils' understanding of different cultures is excellent. They value and comment positively about how pupils from different backgrounds get on so well together. Pupils enjoy celebrating Diwali and Chinese New Year, and learning about different cultures during their daily contact with classmates from different backgrounds. During the inspection, pupils in Key Stage 2 were observed enjoying the opportunity to learn French and develop an appreciation of French culture.
- Attendance is above average. Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure regular attendance. Pupils are invariably punctual and enjoy attending school. Parents are very happy that their children are kept safe in the school and are particularly clear that behaviour is good.

The leadership and management are good

- The drive and commitment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, along with strong support from the governors, is the key to the school's good effectiveness. High expectations and aspirations help teachers, support staff, parents and pupils to understand how to improve the

school further.

- Leadership is having a positive impact on accelerating improvement in achievement across the school. The deputy headteacher and leaders of year groups in Key Stage 2, for example, are role models of teaching excellence. Subject leaders are fully involved in developing initiatives to promote improvement in the subjects for which they are responsible.
- The leadership of teaching is good. Leaders' judgements on the quality of teaching are accurate. Improvements in teaching are contributing through an effective programme of staff training and coaching. Teachers' performance is well managed and weaker teaching is rigorously challenged. Teachers have measurable targets which are linked to best practice, pupils' progress, school priorities and salary progression.
- Good systems to check on pupils' learning underpin the improvements to their achievement. This ensures that leaders can act quickly to address any gaps or if pupils start to fall behind. For example, weaknesses were pinpointed following the Key Stage 1 assessments and subject leaders given additional time out of the classroom to track progress and target areas for development.
- School staff support newly qualified teachers effectively. The headteacher contributes to the post-graduate teaching course at Leicester University and the deputy headteacher leads 'Focus Days' for these students on a range of topics. The headteacher chairs the 'Family' of local schools meetings which share best practice, professional development and help pupils to make a smooth transition to secondary school.
- The curriculum is well planned with topics which interest pupils so that they are motivated to learn. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and is enriched, particularly by the creative and expressive arts. The rich displays of pupils' artwork around the school confirm this.
- The primary school sports funding is used to improve teachers' knowledge of physical education and to promote clubs, competitions and performance levels. Consequently, it makes a good contribution towards establishing healthy lifestyles and pupils' well-being.
- The local authority has supported the school's self-evaluation and its planning and performance by providing suitable training for teachers and governors.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know the school's strengths and areas for development and how well its performance compares with that of other schools. They appropriately challenge and support senior leaders. They have discussed and agreed how pupil premium funding should be spent and have reviewed the difference this has made to the progress of eligible pupils. They have also discussed and agreed how additional sports funding will be spent and understand how the impact of this on participation and pupil health will be monitored and evaluated. Performance management arrangements are very thorough, matched to best practice and well understood by governors. Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make sure that pay and promotion are justified by the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and achievement. Governors oversee sound financial management, equal opportunities for all and see that discrimination is not tolerated. They make sure that all statutory duties are met, including those for pupils' safeguarding.

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	120070
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	440559

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Hudson
Headteacher	Keith Culverwell
Date of previous school inspection	10 May 2011
Telephone number	0116 2873582
Fax number	0116 2322516
Email address	theoffice@thehall.leics.sch.uk

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