

Heatherbrook Primary School

Astill Lodge Road, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 1BE

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Inadequate | 4 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| 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

- Standards have improved since the previous inspection but are still not high enough. Progress remains inconsistent especially in writing.
- Pupils' skills in spelling, handwriting, punctuation and grammar are not good enough.
- Pupils do not always know how they can improve. They do not always respond to the advice from teachers.
- Staff do not yet make full use of the new system for tracking pupils' progress.
- In some lessons teachers do not make the best use of time to maximise pupils' learning. Low level misbehaviour is not always dealt with well enough.
- Although there is good and better practice in the school not enough is done to help teachers learn from each other.
- Turbulence in staffing and changes to the leadership mean that leaders have not got an effective enough system in place for monitoring teachers' performance.
- The most-able pupils have not been sufficiently well provided for and too few reach the higher levels.

The school has the following strengths

- Progress is rapidly improving. Pupils are on track to achieve better results in reading and mathematics.
- Much of the current teaching observed in the classroom and in pupils' books is good and is supporting pupils' learning well.
- The learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children have a good start to their schooling.
- The acting headteacher has addressed many of the school's weaknesses including dealing with the most significant behaviour issues.
- Leadership at all levels is improving rapidly through well-targeted training. The school is now working to a clear and robust improvement plan.
- Governors are improving their work through clever recruitment and training so they can better hold the school to account.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons. Many of these were observed jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the acting headteacher, staff, governors, pupils, parents and a representative of the local authority.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined. Some pupils read books with the inspectors.
- The inspectors took account of the school's own recent survey of parents' views. Too few parents have used Parent View, the online survey, for it to be analysed.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documents, including data on pupils' progress and attainment produced by the school, procedures for safeguarding, the school's own evaluations of its work, reports to the governing body and the plans for raising attainment.

Inspection team

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Geof Timms, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Carol Deakin | Additional Inspector |

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Heatherbrook Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is currently led by an acting headteacher during the substantive headteacher's absence.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has an above-average proportion of pupils from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A much higher than average proportion of the pupils is supported by the pupil premium grant. In this school, this provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A very small number of pupils attend the Phoenix Pupil Referral Unit for part of the week.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club for pupils.
- There is a privately-run pre-school on the school site. This is inspected and reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make more of the teaching consistently good or outstanding by:
 - helping all teachers deal effectively with low level misbehaviour so that all pupils can concentrate on their learning
 - making sure pupils understand how to improve their work and that they respond to suggestions
 - ensuring the time given to different activities in lessons gives pupils sufficient but not too much time to complete their work
- Raise standards in writing by:
 - improving pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills
 - developing a good handwriting style from an early age
- Improve the leadership and management by:
 - developing the school's systems for setting targets for teachers so that leaders are more effective in improving pupils' achievement
 - helping all staff make effective use of the information on the recently introduced tracking system to ensure that everyone can follow the progress of different groups of pupils
 - improving the provision for the most-able pupils so that they are set harder work to help them make greater progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2013 were below average at the end of Year 2. At the end of Year 6 standards were below average in English and mathematics but had improved significantly from 2012. Too few pupils reached the higher levels.
- Although pupils are now making faster progress overall, they do not make as much progress in writing throughout the school as they do in reading and mathematics. They have poor grammar, punctuation and handwriting skills and their spelling is not accurate. The school has recently developed more opportunities for pupils to write at length and in different subjects and there is evidence of some high quality and much improved work.
- When they start school, many children have lower levels of knowledge and understanding than are typical for their age. This includes their personal, social and emotional development and their communication skills. They make good progress in the Reception class because they are taught very effectively. Because of this, their achievement is often close to that expected when they start in Year 1.
- The results of the check on pupils' skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics) in Year 1 show that standards were above the national average. Boys did especially well and this reflects some good well-targeted teaching of reading. Pupils have the skills to help them read words that are new to them. This was shown when they read to an inspector. Throughout the school they are beginning to read more widely and often.
- Standards in mathematics, reading and writing at the end of Year 2 have been consistently around the same level for a number of years. However, the current pupils are on track to do better than was the case last year with more of them reaching the higher levels. Currently all groups of pupils in Year 2 are making good progress in mathematics and reading although progress in writing is not as good.
- Standards at the end of Year 6 rose in 2013 and were the best for three years. The current group of pupils contains a high proportion that finds learning more difficult and, although they are on track to meet the Government's floor standards, attainment is unlikely to be as good as last year. Even so, progress is improving especially in mathematics where pupils have recently made a year's progress in a term and a half. The progress in reading is broadly average but that in writing is not as good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive effective extra help through a wide range of small group and one-to-one work with trained adults. This has had a positive impact in number work and in helping less confident readers and is evident in their current good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language make good progress and rapidly catch up with their classmates.
- In 2013, pupils supported through pupil premium funding were about one-and-a-half terms behind their classmates in reading, in grammar, punctuation and spelling they were two terms behind, in writing they were about a term behind but in mathematics they were almost a term ahead. The gap had narrowed significantly from the previous year in writing and mathematics. The current school data shows that these pupils are often making better progress than their classmates and closing the gap still further.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- Teaching requires improvement because it still has inconsistent impact on pupils' progress. Teachers do not always deal successfully with incidents of low level misbehaviour. This means the learning for some pupils is interrupted and too little progress is made. For example, in one lesson, the teacher continued teaching while the teaching assistant tried to focus the attention of a number of pupils. This meant some pupils were not listening closely to the teacher.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved although there are inconsistencies in how well it tells pupils what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils do not always find time to respond to teachers' written guidance. This means comments are not always followed up and improvements not always evident in pupils' later work.
- Activities are not always planned well enough to ensure all groups of pupils make good progress. Some pupils find the work too easy and finish quickly whilst others find it too hard and do not complete it.
- Recent work to tackle weaknesses in teaching has been successful although this is yet to be fully evident in the outcomes for all pupils. The impact of teaching is improving but remains inconsistent throughout the school. There is not enough outstanding teaching to have sufficient impact on pupils' progress, especially in writing.
- The recent planning for more opportunities for pupils to work in small groups and to increase the amount of discussion has had a very positive impact on learning. For example, in Year 5 pupils were able to discuss together very sensibly how to improve paragraphs they had written the previous day.
- Teachers are well supported by their teaching assistants. This is especially the case for the pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. Teaching staff and support assistants help these pupils make good progress and narrow the gap between them and their classmates. These staff are also effective in supporting disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They also provide good support to small groups of pupils or to individuals.
- Adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage help children settle happily and safely into school. A good range of exciting and interesting activities are provided. This was evident, for example, in how well the children used plans of the school grounds to seek out and plot dinosaur bones.

The behaviour and safety of pupils**requires improvement**

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. More remains to be done to ensure their behaviour does not hinder their learning or that of their classmates. The school has started to work hard with some of the more challenging pupils and their families to address their social and emotional needs. The nurture group and the breakfast club, for example, are successful in helping pupils socialise and learn to get on together well.
- In too many lessons low level misbehaviour is not dealt with well enough by teachers. Too much teaching assistant time is spent in ensuring pupils are listening and not talking. However, the amount of more serious incidents of misbehaviour has been rapidly reduced since the acting headteacher took on her role.
- Most of the parents spoken with during the inspection were positive about how happy and safe their children are at school. A small number still had concerns over how well the school dealt

with incidents of poorer behaviour. All parents were very positive about the provision in the Reception class.

- Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors. During the inspection they were happy to talk to the inspectors about their work and school. Younger pupils volunteered to take inspectors on a tour of the playground during break times. Older pupils take on responsibilities through a play leader scheme giving them the chance to lead sporting activities and games for younger children.
- Pupils say bullying does not happen. They are aware of the different types of bullying, such as through the use of computers or mobile phones. There have been fewer exclusions of pupils recently and, where these occur, appropriate records are kept. The small number of pupils with behavioural or emotional difficulties who attend The Phoenix Unit for part of the week benefit from specialist support. Their progress is well tracked and communication between the school and the unit is good. The school has an effective partnership with the local authority's behaviour support service.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and their views are supported by most parents and carers spoken to during the inspection.
- Attendance has fallen recently and in 2013 was well below average. The school has reacted quickly and appointed a family liaison officer to promote better attendance and to deal with persistent absenteeism. The links they are building with a number of families, as well as the local authority's welfare officers, is already having a positive impact and attendance is currently closer to the national average than it has been for a number of years.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leadership and management have improved since the previous inspection there have been significant changes in the leadership team. Currently the school is being very well-led by an acting headteacher although at the time of the inspection this remained on a temporary basis. The leadership is not good because leaders have not yet had a full impact on the work of the school or on pupils' achievement.
- The school is aware of the need to raise standards for all pupils as recent improvements have not yet had long enough to have a full impact on raising standards. Even so, the acting headteacher and governing body have a clear vision to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. This has been reinforced and supported by the good challenge and training opportunities provided by the local authority. The school has willingly accepted advice and has made use of expertise from other schools and from external consultants to tackle weaknesses.
- Staff have not had enough opportunities to learn from other good or better practice in the past. This is at an early stage of being addressed and more remains to be done so that the best practice within the school, and in other settings, is spread. The recently introduced system for tracking and recording pupils' progress is already having a positive impact on how well leaders can quickly identify underachievement. This is not yet the case for class teachers and early years' leaders who are at an early stage of understanding the data.
- The acting headteacher has worked quickly to develop accurate and honest self-evaluation of the school's current strengths and weaknesses. With this as a basis she has produced, alongside staff and the governing body, a detailed and robust development plan which contains appropriate priorities for the school's continuing improvement. However, the school has not yet made plans to provide for its most-able pupils so that their learning is enriched and more reach

the higher levels.

- Whilst the leaders have ensured that there is no discrimination within the school the variations in teaching and progress demonstrate that there is still more to be done to ensure all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed.
- A major strength of the recent changes to the leadership has been the development of an enthusiastic and knowledgeable senior and middle leadership team. This has been the result of effective training in leadership skills. Leaders are growing in their effectiveness in coaching, supporting and challenging weaker teaching.
- The acting headteacher is at an early stage of updating the systems for using lesson observations and other monitoring activities as a good tool for supporting and challenging staff. The checking of performance targets and the setting of new ones for individual staff are not yet ensuring a sound focus on improving pupils' learning.
- The leadership of the provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. There is a good range of adult support. The available data shows the success of this work especially in reading and early number skills. The analysis of data ensures a clear overview of these pupils' progress.
- The funding available through the pupil premium is used well to help pupils known to be eligible for free school meals to take a full part in school life. They receive, where appropriate, specific resources and additional help from adults. The primary school sports' funding is being used very effectively to improve provision and train staff, especially through links with a local outstanding secondary school sports partnership.
- The school uses the range of subjects and activities effectively to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Effective use of visiting experts and visits, locally and further afield, enrich the curriculum and enhance the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world. There is a good range of after-school clubs and activities.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has worked hard to improve the impact of its work since the previous inspection. Recently the governing body has restructured its 'make-up' and systems for checking on the work of the school. This has quickly resulted in better support and challenge regarding the school's performance. The governors have recruited well to make sure there is a good range of skills which can be called upon by the school.
 - Governors check on the school's work through discussions with staff, acting headteacher's reports and the school improvement committee which is described by one governor as 'the heart of the governing body.' They have a much improved understanding of the school's assessment data. This enables them to take part in good professional discussion with staff.
 - Members of the governing body have a growing understanding of how targets are set for teachers and of appraisal systems. They are aware these are changing under the new leadership and that more remains to be done to create fully effective methods for checking how effective they are in improving the quality of teaching and in making decisions about teachers' pay increases.
 - Governors track finances well and assist the school in deciding how to spend additional money to support pupils eligible for free school meals and to extend sports and physical education.
 - The governing body makes sure that arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet the current national requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 120067 |
| Local authority | Leicester City |
| Inspection number | 424921 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 186 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Rob Osborn |
| Headteacher | Lee Venning |
| Date of previous school inspection | 13 September 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0116 2357721 |
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