

Howes Community Primary School

Palmero Avenue, Cheylesmore, Coventry, CV3 5EH

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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

- The progress pupils make in reading, writing and mathematics has improved this academic year, but as yet not enough pupils are reaching the standards they should be by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is improving, but is not yet consistently good enough to promote good achievement.
- The most able pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable, because the work set for them in lessons is occasionally not challenging enough.
- The written feedback that teachers provide does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- Pupils do not always know their learning targets in English and mathematics, or how to achieve them.
- Parents feel that that the school's leaders do not communicate effectively with them. They are not clear about all the changes made this year, and do not feel full partners in their children's learning.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are now making outstanding progress, due to excellent teaching and the vibrant learning environment.
- Better teaching of letters and the sounds they make (phonics) is improving pupils' reading skills and encouraging a desire to read widely.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning have markedly improved over the last year.
- The new headteacher and deputy headteacher, ably supported by other leaders, have made rapid and positive changes to the school.
- The restructured governing body is now challenging and carrying out its duties effectively.
- Some pupils are making particularly good progress, including those supported by additional funding, pupils new to learning English and pupils in the hearing impaired unit.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed nine lessons, five of which were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school information regarding the progress pupils make, the quality of teaching over time, school improvement and the quality of safeguarding procedures. They also scrutinised attendance information.
- Inspectors heard a number of pupils read and scrutinised a range of their work across the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils from both the main school and the hearing impaired unit. Discussions took place with the Chair and two other members of the governing body, members of the senior leadership team, including the head of the hearing impaired unit, and a representative of the local authority. A brief discussion was also held with a parent.
- Inspectors took account of the 54 replies to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), eight written responses to the parent questionnaire and the 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors were accompanied by a sign language interpreter for part of the time.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Stuart Ransom

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Howes Community Primary school is an average-sized primary school.
- The school has an Early Years Foundation Stage, containing a nursery and a reception class, and one class per year group in Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The school has specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in the form of a hearing impaired unit for nine pupils within the school. These pupils are supported through the use of sign language, hearing aids linked to sound fields and other amplification technology and spoken language specialists.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional funding to support pupils who are entitled to a free school meal or in the care of the local authority, is above average.
- The majority of pupils are of White British origin.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average and many enter the school speaking no English at all.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is well below average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Over the last few years the school has had a number of acting headteachers and major staffing changes, including to senior leadership team. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, many of the middle and subject leaders and the vast majority of the teaching staff were appointed in September 2013 or during the current academic year.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and raise achievement by:
 - using the most effective practice within the school to ensure that all teachers' marking helps pupils to clearly understand how to improve their work
 - making pupils fully aware of their learning targets and how they can achieve them
 - consistently challenging the most able pupils to accelerate their progress, so that they can reach the higher national curriculum levels.
- Improve leadership and management by developing effective communication with parents, so they are fully informed and feel part of the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- During this last academic year progress across the whole school has risen noticeably and the current Year 5 pupils are on track to reach higher standards. However, this has not yet led to high enough attainment at the end of Year 6, and it is still below average.
- Occasionally teachers do not always challenge the most able pupils. For example, in several mathematics lessons observed tasks set were too easy and especially so for the most able pupils. Follow-up work was also inappropriate for their ability level and so in these lessons pupils did not make the progress of which they were capable.
- Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 did not achieve as well as their peers nationally in the national phonics screening check. However, school information on pupils' progress in phonics shows that it is now improving due to teachers receiving further training and much tighter monitoring systems. Although the senior leadership team expects results to be improved this year, it accepts that they may not reach national levels. However, school information clearly shows that the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are well on course to exceed national levels. This is shown by the 92% of children currently achieving or on track to achieve the Early Years Foundation Stage levels of achievement.
- Where learning is at its best pupils make good and at times outstanding progress. This was clearly seen during a lesson in the hearing impaired unit. Pupils from the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 were learning about healthy living, with a pineapple as the main stimulus. Excellent discussion and skilful questioning by staff rapidly developed the pupils' understanding of healthy foods. Excellent modelling of sign language, spoken language and sentence structure also allowed pupils to make excellent progress in all aspects of their language and communication skills.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Pupils with hearing impairment do particularly well and at times make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning. They use sign language fluently and their spoken language improves rapidly as they move up through the school. Discussions with all the pupils clearly showed their love of learning and enjoyment both in the unit and mainstream classrooms.
- The new initiatives to raise standards in reading and writing are improving pupils' skills. In Key Stage 2 pupils are supplied with electronic accelerated readers, which are rapidly helping them make up lost ground and have given them an incentive to read more widely. As they also record a detailed assessment on each book read, staff have an accurate view of how pupils are progressing. The pupils who read to the inspectors did so with fluency, accuracy and a full understanding of the text and characters within the book.
- As national test results related to mathematics show, the improvements in this subject have not been as marked as the initiatives are more recent. However, school information shows that progress is now improving due to better teaching that is leading to pupils enjoying the subject, which is now much more relevant and fun. During the inspection all the mathematics seen was closely linked to the school's sport week theme. Younger pupils were involved in aspects such as simple tally charts and basic data interpretation. Older pupils were collecting, correlating and producing graphs from results from a wide range of activities taking place.
- The pupils supported by pupil premium funding make good and at times outstanding progress. The senior leadership team and subject leaders monitor their progress carefully. In lessons, pupils were helped by well-trained teaching assistants or specialist support staff, all of whom

regularly noted their progress. School information shows that by the end of Year 6 these pupils are on track to leave the school with skills and knowledge above their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good and at times outstanding progress, especially those who speak English as an additional language. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, school information clearly shows that over half the current children enter the school speaking English as an additional language. Many of these children spoke no English at all. Specialist support, excellent teaching and resources, and excellent phonics and language teaching have resulted in the children now being on track to exceed the levels expected nationally for their age by the end of the school year.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has improved rapidly over the past academic year, but it is still inconsistent. Teachers do not always provide the most able pupils with work which is challenging. There are examples of high quality marking, which is informative and allows pupils to know how to improve their work. However, this is inconsistent and holds back progress for some pupils as they are not sure how to improve their work.
- Teachers do not consistently make sure that their pupils know their learning targets or how to reach them. Pupils said that although some had them in their books, they were not always clear what they meant or how they could reach them. Others did not have them in their books and did not know their targets. Where learning was most effective, teachers had fully explained to their pupils their targets, what they meant, with examples of work and then how they could achieve them.
- The new teaching team has had a wide range of training in order to bring about rapid improvements in teachers' skills. The teaching of phonics and reading in general is improving pupils' skills across the school and especially in Key Stage 2.
- Specific training in mathematics, new resources and better planning across different subjects have resulted in pupils gaining a wider range of skills and subject knowledge. Pupils spoken to said they felt much more confident, teachers were better skilled at explaining learning and so they made faster progress. Teachers monitor pupils' progress more effectively and use this information to develop their lesson and to plan future learning.
- The highly positive relationships teachers have built with their pupils have helped to reduce behavioural issues, engage pupils in learning and so raise progress rates. The other adults who support learning are used well by all teachers and provide good help and guidance to the pupils. This is seen very clearly in the work they do with pupils with hearing impairment. Their questioning skills, clear verbal language and use of sign language all help these pupils merge into their mainstream classes as easily as all the other pupils.
- Teaching for pupils with hearing impairment is outstanding and all staff in the unit are highly trained. They show high expectations and this is clearly having a positive effect on the pupils' progress in all areas of their learning and development. They carefully check it across the whole school, and both support and monitor the quality of teaching for these pupils in the mainstream classes. This was seen to particularly good effect during assemblies. Not only did the teacher use sign language throughout, but so too did all the pupils and other staff in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are friendly and considerate towards each other. Pupils who have physical disabilities and those from the hearing impaired unit all stated that they felt very much part of the school. In assemblies, pupils were highly attentive and showed their appreciation of the visitors they had leading them and celebrated the successes of their peers.
- In lessons pupils behave well and are eager and keen to learn. This is because all teachers show high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. This is reflected in the rapid improvement in attendance, which has now risen to the national average. Pupils follow instructions promptly and good routines across the whole school ensure lessons run smoothly. Just occasionally, pupils become distracted and less interested in their learning.
- The staff and older pupils provide good role models for the younger children to copy. This is especially so in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where these positive role models help the children develop important social skills through learning and playing cooperatively with others. The children share and take turns sensibly. For example, in one lesson, the children happily played together and shared toys and other objects, whilst discussing healthy foods and living.
- The pupils and staff rightly feel that behaviour is good. Some parents raised concerns regarding behaviour, but well-kept records clearly show that instances of poor behaviour have dropped dramatically. Pupils are polite and courteous and this was evident in the way that all, regardless of their age, held doors open and stood aside to allow adults and other pupils to pass.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school has a calm and relaxed atmosphere and all pupils spoken to said they feel safe and secure. The staff also feel the school is a safe and happy place. The school site is secure, the buildings are in good repair and the senior leadership team is rigorous in its approach to safeguarding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and how to stay safe on the internet. Pupils say there are few issues and any which arise are dealt with effectively by the staff. Pupils say that they know who to go to if they feel threatened in any way, and that they can talk to all the staff.
- The pupils in the hearing impaired unit all said they feel safe and very much part of the school, which strongly reflects the school's strong and effective approach to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. Pupils stated that there had been some bullying and name-calling, but this had come from visiting pupils. They also stated that the pupils from Howes school were horrified at this and were most protective of each other.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- The leadership team and most of the staff are new to the school since September 2013. Before this there had been a long period of disruption, leading to falling standards in English and mathematics, a slowing of progress rates across the whole school and disruptive behaviour. This has not yet been fully resolved and is still holding back the current Year 6 pupils. Also leaders have not ensured that the most able pupils are being challenged enough, and so standards by the end of the current year will still not be as high as they should be.
- Issues in terms of falling standards and the loss of a number of teachers over several years caused problems for the new leadership and management team. They have rightly had to make marked and rapid changes to aspects such as the leadership structure and the subjects pupils are taught. However, parents feel they are not being kept fully informed or involved in the school. The replies to Parent View suggest this is due to lack of communication. As a response the senior leadership team use a weekly newsletter to communicate and consult with parents,

but are aware that they need to have further discussions with the parents to explain their actions.

- Leaders at all levels are all strongly committed to raising standards rapidly. Their initiatives are having a positive effect. Progress rates are rising across the whole school, especially in reading and mathematics. Behaviour has improved dramatically and attendance is rapidly improving.
- Effective systems for monitoring and tracking the progress pupils make provide all staff with accurate information on which to plan future learning. Senior leaders monitor teaching closely and effectively, and have successfully eradicated inadequate teaching. However, they are also fully aware that they have not yet done enough to ensure it is consistently good enough to raise standards by Year 6.
- Leaders at all levels are held accountable for their year groups, subjects or other areas of responsibility. The leadership and management of both the Early Years Foundation Stage and the hearing impaired unit are good. All leaders monitor their areas effectively and are fully aware that the strategies to improve the school have not as yet shown their full effect. However, school information, which has been rigorously monitored by the local authority, supporting schools and governing body, clearly shows their impact so far.
- The senior leadership team and subject leaders have an accurate picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They cross-reference the quality of each aspect of the school through looking carefully at pupils' work, analysing data on their attainment and progress, observing lessons and holding discussions with the pupils to ensure they have a full and clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning. All the leaders and managers, staff and governors have a very well defined vision for the school, and have the skills and understanding needed to attain their vision quickly and effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has recently been reformed and is now much more strategic and focused in its role. The governors carry out their statutory duties effectively and are well trained to ensure they can and do challenge and support the school effectively. All safeguarding aspects meet requirements. The governing body works in conjunction with the senior leadership team to ensure that the performance management of all staff is carried out well and is tightly linked to pay, teachers' standards and training needs. They monitor all funding well and know how and where the pupil premium and primary sports funding are used and how they affect pupils' achievement. They also work closely with the senior leadership team to ensure that everyone has equal opportunities and there is no discrimination within the school.

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	134426
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	443832

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	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Adrian Higginbotham
Headteacher	Sioux Cooke
Date of previous school inspection	22 September 2010
Telephone number	024 7641 1711
Fax number	024 7669 3392
Email address	admin@howes.coventry.sch.uk

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