

Heelands School

Glovers Lane, Heelands, Milton Keynes, MK13 7QL

Inspection dates

15–16 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Effective leadership and management ensure that pupils make consistently good progress across the school. Consequently, from their starting points, pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2.
- Leaders and governors maintain regular checks on how well the school is performing. As a result, they are in a good position to secure further improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Children in the Reception Year achieve well, due to a well-planned and well-taught range of motivating activities.
- Pupils are eager to learn and their behaviour is good, which helps them to do well in lessons. They relate well with each other and feel safe at school.
- Good teaching contributes effectively to pupils' strong progress over time. Teachers and the additional adults are adept in keeping pupils engaged with their learning.
- The range of taught subjects and activities takes into account the new National Curriculum. It contributes fully to pupils' achievement in their basic skills and enriches their learning.
- The contribution made by subject and other leaders is stronger than at the time of the previous inspection. They lead with enthusiasm and to good effect.
- Parents feel that the school works well with them and that it greatly benefits their children.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The checks made by teachers on pupils' progress in lessons are not always sharp enough to help all pupils to achieve their best.
- Insufficient attention is paid to developing pupils' spoken language so that they express themselves clearly.
- Pupils do not always punctuate their written work correctly.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching in 10 lessons or parts of lessons, including five lessons observed jointly with the headteacher. Additionally, the inspector reviewed a sample of last year's and current written work to check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement over time.
- Meetings were held with a selected group of pupils and with senior and subject leaders. The inspector met the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's tracking of current pupils' progress, a summary of the school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, planning and monitoring documentation, records of behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.
- The response to the online Parent View questionnaire was too small to be shown on the Ofsted website. The inspector took into account the findings of the school's own survey, which attracted a substantial response. The inspector also talked informally to a small number of parents at the start of school on the second day of the inspection.
- The inspector considered 18 questionnaires returned by staff

Inspection team

Krishan Sharma, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Nearly two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The rest come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The proportion of those speaking English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion who are supported by school action plus, or have a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. This is extra funding provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be or have been eligible for free school meals.
- There is full-time provision for children of Reception age.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by ensuring that teachers consistently:
 - keep a close check on pupils' understanding and rate of progress in all lessons and adjust their teaching to support and challenge those who could do better
 - strengthen pupils' spoken language so that they are able to explain their ideas clearly
 - check that pupils punctuate their writing correctly in their work in English and in other subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

are good

- The headteacher's effective leadership has secured substantial improvement, particularly in the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Senior leaders and governors continue to give the school a strong direction. Their current priorities are the right ones to drive up further improvement in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Leaders make regular checks on the impact of teaching, including through the collection of data tracking pupils' progress as they move through the school. As a result, the school has a clear view of the effectiveness of its provision. The results of these checks lead to the allocation of extra help for pupils who need specific attention. Consequently, leaders are able to ensure that there is equal opportunity for all to succeed and there is no discrimination.
- The use of the pupil premium is effective. Teachers and additional adults provide all the eligible pupils with suitable work to meet their identified needs. This results in their faster progress and better attainment that is often similar to other pupils in the school and nationally.
- Careful thought has been given to assessing pupils' progress and the standards they achieve and aligning assessment arrangements with the new curriculum. A good range of evidence is collected and discussed to decide on whether pupils have gained the expected standard. Although the preparation is not yet complete, staff display enough confidence in measuring pupils' progress accurately and consistently.
- Subject and other leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects, or areas of responsibility. They keep abreast of recent developments in assessment and the curriculum, and have been influential in their implementation.
- The use of the primary school sport grant has been effective in increasing pupils' participation in a broader range of physical activities. It has extended teachers' expertise in the teaching of physical education.
- Arrangements for managing teachers' performance are clearly designed to link any pay increases to their effectiveness in the classroom and the progress their pupils make. Staff training takes into account teachers' individual targets for improvement as well as the training needed for effective implementation of the school's priorities.
- The school continues to provide a broad and balanced curriculum, which contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is rightly focused on strengthening pupils' basic skills and enriching pupils' learning through numerous extra activities. The school takes pride in promoting a set of values, such as respect for and tolerance of cultural and religious diversity, and prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents are happy that the school engages with them and keeps them well informed about their children's progress at school. They find staff, particularly the headteacher, approachable.
- The local authority has maintained light-touch contact with the school. Links with Reception have been particularly worthwhile in recognising its good assessment practice and sharing it with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well informed about the school's performance, including how it compares with other schools nationally. It has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. As a result, it is well equipped to support and challenge leaders to secure further improvement.
 - The governors are aware of the overall quality of teaching. They ensure decisions on teachers' pay take into account teachers' effectiveness in the classroom and reward only good teaching.
 - The governing body keeps a regular oversight of the use of the pupil premium and the extent to which it is helping the disadvantaged pupils to narrow the gap with others in the school and nationally.
 - The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet current national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Most parents, staff and pupils agree this is typically the case. The management of behaviour is highly consistent and is reassuring for pupils and their parents.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and contribute well to their progress and achievement. They show commitment when working on their own or in small groups. Only rarely do a few lose concentration, especially when a lesson is moving too slowly for them. Their conduct in and around the school demonstrates that they respect school rules.

- Pupils take care of the school building and outdoor facilities. Litter is extremely rare and corridors are full of displays of pupils' recent work. Pupils take pride in their appearance.
- Good relationships and the teaching of core values, including 'friendship', 'respect' and 'responsibility', contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils get on well with pupils from different backgrounds and they show good manners towards each other and adults in the school.
- Attendance is improving after a recent dip and is now average. Senior leaders and the governing body have been actively promoting good attendance and they vigorously follow up cases of persistent absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The required checks on the suitability of staff and visitors and potential risks, for example during educational visits, are made meticulously. Teachers make pupils aware of the risks around them in the school. As a result, pupils understand that they have a responsibility for their own and others' safety. Parents are satisfied with the care shown towards their children's safety and welfare.
- Pupils have good awareness of the different forms bullying can take, such as name-calling or the misuse of the internet or that which is prejudice-based. The school's records show that racist incidents are extremely rare.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Typically, teaching captures pupils' interest and promotes positive attitudes to learning. Skilful questioning draws out what pupils already understand and it helps teachers to plan for the next steps in their learning. At the start of most lessons, teachers set the right tone for learning. As a result, most pupils and groups make good progress and achieve well.
- Additional adults are deployed routinely to give extra help, often to disadvantaged groups, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language. The individual attention these pupils receive is based on accurate assessment of their needs. The ensuing support meets their identified needs effectively. Consequently, their learning improves over time.
- Teachers set work that is usually challenging enough for different groups of pupils, including the most able. As a result, most pupils make good progress.
- Marking is regular and helpful. It points out what pupils have done well and what they still need to improve. Pupils are expected to show that they have acted on the advice given to them, and most do.
- Teachers maintain a regular check on pupils' progress in lessons. When it is thorough, teachers are quick to adjust their planned work, particularly for those pupils who are ready to move on. However, this does not always happen. Consequently, occasionally, a few pupils continue to do work that is either too easy or too hard, and do not make the best possible progress.
- Effective teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) across the school contributes to pupils' good progress and achievement in reading. Teachers provide numerous opportunities for pupils to write and they promote the correct use of grammar. However, not enough checks are made on whether pupils' use of basic punctuation is consistently correct in their writing in all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their work in lessons but for many this is not enough to learn how to explain their ideas clearly or to discuss their reasoning.
- The teaching of mathematics is increasingly effective. Teachers excite pupils to count fluently and make it fun. As a result, most pupils make accurate calculations.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The standards reached in 2014 at the end of the Reception Year and in the Year 1 phonic screening check show clearly an improving picture of achievement and good gains year-on-year. At the end of Year 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is at least average and is being sustained after having recently risen at a faster rate than nationally. Taken together with the performance of current pupils and pupils' starting points, this represents good achievement.
- Progress in reading is good and is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy reading and can talk about the characters in the text they read. Effective teaching of phonics gives pupils the skills necessary to tackle unfamiliar words. The results of the Year 1 phonic screening check have risen for the second year.
- Writing is improving strongly, but not in all aspects. Pupils talk out loud about what they are going to write

and they are getting better at writing sentences that say what they want to say. However, their use of punctuation is not always correct or consistent.

- Pupils' spoken language is improving. They listen to adults and their peers with interest and are willing to talk about what they are doing. However, their response is not always fluent or clear.
- Progress in mathematics is strong. The emphasis on making pupils fluent in their mental calculations is paying off. Not only are pupils getting quicker in making calculations, they use their skills well in solving simple mathematical problems.
- Most of the most-able pupils do well. The school's data confirm the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels of attainment (Level 3) at the end of Year 2 is rising and compares favourably with the national figures.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is generally good. Most of them make strong progress towards the individual goals set for them. Their attainment compares favourably with their national cohorts. Most of the pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress. Occasionally, those who come speaking limited or no English show remarkably rapid improvement.
- In 2013 (the last published results) the attainment of disadvantaged Year 2 pupils supported by the pupil premium was higher than that of others in the school and other pupils nationally. Across the school, most disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and the gap with others in the school is closing.

The early years provision

is good

- Children make a good start in Reception. Usually, they enter at levels below those that are typical for their age. Most children, from all ability groups and backgrounds, make at least good progress in all areas of learning. Consequently, when children leave the Reception class, they are well prepared for their entry into Year 1.
- Adults plan a stimulating set of activities, covering all areas of children's learning, within the classroom and outdoors. The routine teaching of phonic skills lays a good foundation for reading. Although adults take every opportunity to develop children's communication skills, occasionally, their conversation with children provides insufficient challenge to develop the fluency they need.
- Children behave well and move around with care and are aware of risks in the activities in which they are involved. They relate well with their peers and adults.
- Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is strong. Adults are highly skilled in observing children and making accurate assessment of their learning. Records maintained are exemplary and are used well to keep parents informed fully about their children's progress and achievement in Reception. Pupils who need extra attention are identified quickly and suitable interventions are provided. Adults work well with parents and exchange mutually beneficial information.

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	110382
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	448736

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jamie Hill
Headteacher	Lesley Barnard
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2009
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