

Highworth Combined School and Nursery

Highworth Close, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP13 7PH

Inspection dates 6–7 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
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

- Pupils' achievement, from their different starting points, is good.
- Effective support is given to disabled pupils or those with special educational needs, those at the early stages of learning English and pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding. Therefore these pupils also make good progress.
- Teaching is good across all year groups. As a result, pupils make good progress in lessons.
- Teachers make lessons interesting and encourage all pupils to give of their best.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding. They greatly enjoy coming to Highworth and are extremely keen to learn. They say they feel very safe and are well looked after throughout the school day.
- Children make good progress in the early years provision because of good teaching and stimulating surroundings.
- The headteacher has generated an environment where good teaching and learning flourish. The headteacher and senior leaders are a strong team who have a clear vision for the school's future.
- The staff are a skilled and committed team, who work well to provide a high level of care and support for all pupils.
- Governors know Highworth well and challenge the school where appropriate, which results in ongoing improvement.
- Good promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development means all individuals feel valued. Pupils thrive in a diverse and supportive learning community.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong as in reading and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching does not yet result in enough pupils making outstanding progress.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of phonics (the sounds that letters make) is not always secure.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 25 lessons, 12 of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy head. An upper and lower school assembly were seen, as well as a whole school assembly.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playgrounds.
- Meetings were held with pupils, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and five governors. The lead inspector also had meetings with two representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including national test results and the school's own information about pupils' achievement, governors' minutes, the school's self-evaluation, the school development plan, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils from Years 2, 3 and 4 were heard to read individually.
- The inspectors met parents at the beginning and end of the school day and took account of the 119 responses to the on-line survey, Parent View.
- The 51 staff questionnaires that were returned were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Worthington

Additional Inspector

Georgina Beasley

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Highworth is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in two parallel classes in each year group.
- Pupils come from a range of different minority ethnic backgrounds. The majority come from White British and Pakistani backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak 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 above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is slightly below average. This additional government funding is to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for children's progress and attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school has a specialised resource unit which caters for pupils with hearing impairment.
- The early years provision consists of a part time Nursery and full time Reception classes.
- No pupils are educated off site in other institutions or alternative placements.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are managed separately and were not included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching to raise pupils' achievement, especially in writing, by making sure that:
 - expectations of what pupils can achieve are always high enough
 - the work set is always hard enough so that pupils are consistently challenged to make the best possible progress and attain the highest standards
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in all subjects.
- Improve the pupils' understanding and use of phonics knowledge by:
 - ensuring that pupils have regular opportunities to practice and strengthen their phonic skills in a wide range of subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management is good

- The headteacher has worked effectively to establish a forward-thinking, stable and ambitious school. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have an accurate view of what Highworth does well and what needs to be improved.
- Leadership and management is not outstanding because pupils' levels of attainment in writing are not as high as they could be.
- The headteacher has provided the necessary training and support for middle leaders. This has made them highly effective in monitoring pupils' progress and ensuring that pupils are achieving well.
- Senior staff and subject leaders are fully involved in the school's self evaluation and school improvement. They drive improvement in their subjects across the wider curriculum.
- Highworth is a tight-knit community which prides itself on the school's racial harmony. Pupils and staff interact extremely positively.
- The school's 'Triangulation Document System' ensures regular and rigorous monitoring which means that teachers' performance is accurately analysed. Teachers are held to account and their training needs are met.
- The curriculum is innovative and incorporates a wide and varied selection of topics and learning activities, which are chosen carefully to capture the pupils' imagination.
- There is a good range of after-school and lunchtime clubs which are well attended. However the number of clubs, school events and activities are sometimes restricted by a shortage of space in the school hall.
- The Buckinghamshire Learning Trust, commissioned by the local authority, has provided effective support to help Highworth improve the quality of its teaching and learning.
- Sports funding is used to good effect to improve the quality of teaching in physical education for all year groups. Funding has been allocated to provide for external sports coaches, additional equipment and staff training. This spending has led to increased levels of participation in extra-curricular sports activities.
- Additional funding is used to good effect to support the learning of disadvantaged pupils. As a result, there are no gaps between their rates of progress and levels of attainment and those of other pupils.
- The school engages its parents through regular meetings, newsletters and the school website. In addition there are many events, performances and assemblies to which all parents are invited. During the inspection Reception parents attended a much-enjoyed 'Teddy Bears' Picnic', which included Year 6 pupils.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is a clear strength at Highworth. Visits from religious leaders and 'Youth for Christ' open pupils' eyes to different faiths and cultures. Every opportunity is taken to teach the pupils how to value and respect each other. They have a strong sense of community and are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Parents who responded to Parent View or spoke to the inspectors considered the school was well led and managed. All year groups are over subscribed which reflects the school's popularity.
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements. Discrimination of any kind is not accepted.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are experienced and know their school well. They work closely with the headteacher and have accurate knowledge of Highworth's strengths and areas which need moving forward. Members have been recruited with a broad range of skills, expertise and from different backgrounds. They regularly check on the school's academic performance and understand how to interpret data that shows pupils' standards of attainment and progress. They are able to talk confidently about how gaps in the performance of different groups have been narrowed through successful support and intervention. The governors are kept well

informed regarding the performance of staff and know how good performance is rewarded. They understand what measures are put in place if any underperformance is identified. They ensure that finances are carefully managed. This includes how the primary sports and pupil premium funding is allocated and how effective this spending is.

- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school and have strong positive relationships with senior leaders. Consequently they are able to both challenge and support the senior leadership. Governors make sure that they fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties and child protection requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The pupils are very enthusiastic and focused in all lessons. They respond successfully to the challenges set by their teachers.
- Behaviour around the school and throughout the school day is of a high standard. Pupils play safely and well together at break and lunch times. Relationships throughout the school are positive and supportive.
- Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds relate extremely well to one another. They learn to appreciate different cultures and diversity of lifestyle. This contributes to an extremely friendly and supportive school community.
- Pupils persevere with tasks very well and are keen to help each other. They are proud of Highworth which they genuinely regard as 'their' school.
- A study of records and observations during the inspection confirmed that behaviour over time is outstanding. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are extremely rare.
- During the inspection the headteacher's memorable assemblies exemplified the school's celebration of individual differences and diversity. The message he delivered was - 'We are like bottles. It's what's inside us that counts'.
- Overall attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- Pupils respond maturely and enthusiastically to the wide range of opportunities they have to take on responsibility within the school. These include being house captains, school and eco-council members and class monitors.
- All parents who responded to the Parent View survey or spoke to the inspectors considered that behaviour is consistently of a very high standard.
- The school works hard to ensure equality of opportunity for all, foster good relations and does not accept any discrimination.
- Pupils' achievement is well celebrated. When pupils receive 'Praise on a Postcard' or are chosen as 'Warriors of the Week' they say they feel more confident and successful.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They trust the school to deal with any issues raised promptly and fairly.
- Pupils understand about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist name calling or criticising others for a lifestyle choice. They report that bullying hardly ever happens, but when it does it is sorted out quickly. They feel safe at Highworth and are aware of the risks of using the internet.
- Pupils are aware of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs and activities on offer.
- The headteacher and governors regularly check that the school buildings and grounds are secure and meet health and safety standards.

The quality of teaching is good

- Observations of learning in lessons by inspectors and evidence from students' books over time, shows that teaching is consistently good and ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding because teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
- Effective organisation in the classrooms, combined with high expectations of behaviour, means that teaching and learning takes place in a purposeful and calm atmosphere.
- Pupils understand what teachers expect of them. Whether working together as a class, on their own or in pairs, pupils work effectively and become confident learners.
- Staff work well together and demonstrate good subject knowledge. They develop excellent relationships with their pupils which fosters positive attitudes to learning in the classroom.
- Teachers keep a close check on pupils' learning in lessons and promptly correct any mistakes or misconceptions.
- Teachers regularly check pupils' progress and review their individual learning targets. They provide well for the varying needs and abilities of pupils. However the work set in lessons is not always hard enough to ensure that all pupils are fully challenged.
- Pupils who have English as an additional language and those with disabilities or special educational needs receive a good level of support which enables them to make good progress.
- The teaching of phonics is not reinforced well enough across the curriculum. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to strengthen and practise their phonic skills.
- Marking of work and feedback to pupils is consistently good and all staff follow the school's marking policy based on 'two stars and a wish'. As a result pupils are aware of what to do to improve the quality of their work and the next steps required to achieve it.
- The school's special resource unit offers excellent provision for pupils with hearing impairment. They are able to participate in all aspects of school life, including residential visits.
- All teaching assistants are committed and skilful. They are well deployed and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need extra help.
- All parents responding to the Parent View survey considered that their children are taught well.

The achievement of pupils is good

- A significant proportion of children start at Highworth in the Nursery or Reception classes with skills and knowledge that are below those typical for their ages. The school concentrates on building children's confidence. By the end of Reception children have made good progress.
- By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils reach standards in line with national averages. This progress is sustained through Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards above national averages in reading and mathematics, although slightly below in writing.
- In Key Stage 2 results declined in 2013 but the outcomes in 2014 show that this decline has been reversed. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 4 in reading and mathematics was at or above the national average but below in writing.
- The school's information provides evidence that the current Year 6 cohort is making good progress from low starting points.
- In 2013 the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below average. Of the pupils who did not achieve the expected standard almost all spoke English as an additional language.
- In 2014 progress in mathematics and reading was above national averages and only slightly below in writing.
- Although the school has effective strategies to improve pupils' writing skills, these are only starting to have an impact on standards. Not all pupils have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in a range of subjects. For some pupils these skills include an understanding

of sentence construction, punctuation and grammar.

- In 2014 the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in reading and spelling, punctuation and grammar was above the national average. In mathematics the results were in line with national figures. These results reflect the challenge and expectations for the more able pupils.
- Over time pupils who speak English as an additional language catch up and make good progress in improving their speaking skills. Their attainment in English and mathematics is comparable with others by the end of Year 6. This is because their needs are carefully assessed and they are given effective help.
- The school successfully promotes equality of opportunity by ensuring that all groups achieve well. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive high quality support enabling them to learn quickly.
- Staff track the progress of individual pupils closely. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind are provided with personalised homework journals in English and mathematics for the summer holidays. The pupils who attend Highworth's specialist resource provision for hearing impairment are fully integrated. This enables them to achieve their full potential.
- All pupils develop good social skills and are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

The early years provision

is good

- Children settle in quickly and behave very well. There are well-established routines and effective procedures in place that ensure a smooth transition from homes and pre-school.
- Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes as a result of consistently good teaching. However a proportion of children are not yet reaching expected levels at the end of the Reception year.
- Many children start in the early years provision with skills below those typical for their age, particularly in language and communication. A significant proportion begin school with little or no English.
- The provision is led and managed well. The early years leaders have an accurate view of how well children are doing and what needs to be improved further.
- Adults work well as a team and ensure that all children are able to make good progress. They monitor each child's progress closely on a daily basis and use this information to plan next steps for their learning.
- There are effective strategies in place to help children with little or no English to acquire key language quickly. Although opportunities are sometimes missed to engage children in conversation and extend their learning
- Activities are planned well and designed to engage the children and encourage them to take the initiative in developing their skills. Activities are purposeful, change regularly and reflect themes in teaching and the children's interests.
- Children enjoy their learning and are fully absorbed in their activities. The outdoor areas are used to their full potential. This provides many different opportunities which stimulate the children's interest to explore and investigate.
- Parents speak very positively about the information they receive from the school about how their child is doing. The early years staff work hard to involve the parents in their child's education.

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	110403
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	443854
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 - 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Ferguson
Headteacher	Graeme Kilner
Date of previous school inspection	7 – 8 October 2010
Telephone number	01494 525534
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