

Hamstead Infant School

Tanhouse Avenue, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 5AS

Inspection dates 13–14 November 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.

- The headteacher, together with other senior leaders, has been the major driving force behind improved teaching and raised achievement.
- Governors provide strong leadership. They ask leaders challenging questions which contribute to continued improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
- Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because learning is fun.
- Attainment is above average by the end of Year 2. All pupils achieve well from their different starting points because they are taught well.
- The school is particularly good at breaking down barriers to learning. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve as well as others. Some of these pupils make outstanding progress.
- Teaching is good, and writing is taught particularly well.
- Pupils are well behaved and take great pride in their work.
- Attendance has improved because pupils love coming to school.
- Pupils feel safe and know they are part of a very caring community.
- Pupils are valued as individuals and their wide range of cultural backgrounds is celebrated.
- The school promotes British values well. Staff reinforce these values regularly through the curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Pupils receive a wealth of good quality learning opportunities. The 'Forest School' area is of excellent quality and contributes much to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Too few pupils reach higher levels in mathematics because not all teachers ask enough of their most-able pupils. Until recently, many pupils lacked the skills needed to reach higher levels.
- When they mark work, teachers do not always let pupils know what they need to do to improve their skills, particularly in mathematics.
- Adults other than teachers who support pupils do not have enough opportunities to share and learn from the outstanding practice that exists within the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons, four of which were seen together with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with pupils, and representatives of the governing body and staff, including senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also spoke to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, looked at their work in a wide variety of books and talked to them about their learning.
- Inspectors took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). They also looked at the results of the school’s own questionnaires and spoke informally with parents and carers.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, policies, and information about pupil’s progress and attainment. They also scrutinised records of how the school sets targets for teachers to improve their work and looked at child protection and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Kath Campbell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Chris Stevens

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hamstead is an average-sized primary school.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has seen a rise in the number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. Currently, nearly three-quarters of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, with just under four in ten speaking English as an additional language. Both these figures are above the national average.
- A third of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion is higher than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- Currently, just under 5% of pupils are disabled or have special educational needs. This proportion is below the national average.
- Children join the Nursery on a part-time basis in the term following their third birthday. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in mathematics by making sure that:
 - pupils build up their calculation and problem solving skills as they move through the school so that they are able to develop the advanced skills they need to reach higher levels by the time they leave
 - teachers always have the highest expectations of what the most able mathematicians can achieve.
- Make teaching outstanding by ensuring that:
 - adults who support teachers in the classroom share and learn from the outstanding practice that exists within the school
 - teachers use marking consistently well to give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work, especially in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The school is well led by the headteacher and other senior leaders. Their strong commitment towards improvement has resulted in better teaching and a sharp rise in attainment in 2014. Senior leaders know their school well. They have an honest, accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. The school improvement plan is well directed at key priorities.
- Staff are proud to work in the school. The very positive relationships that exist between adults and pupils provide a good environment for learning where pupils can flourish academically and socially.
- Subject leadership is good because teachers have a clear view of whether pupils are doing well enough in their subjects. The leadership of provision for special educational needs and for disadvantaged pupils is particularly effective, as reflected in the outstanding progress made by some individual pupils.
- Systems for measuring the progress of pupils are rigorous and contribute greatly to the recent rise in attainment. Teachers are far more accountable for the standards achieved than in the past. Good quality training has improved staff's professional skills in, for example, the teaching of phonics (letters and sounds). Teachers have regular opportunities to learn from other colleagues by working alongside them. By contrast, other adults who support pupils do not have enough opportunities to share and learn from the excellent practice that inspectors observed in the school.
- The school has prepared well for changes to the way in which pupils' progress is measured and to how the National Curriculum is taught. Opportunities for pupils to develop creativity and independence are particularly strong and make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils learn first-hand about other religions and cultures. They have developed a good simple understanding of life and values in modern, democratic Britain. The Forest School adds greatly to pupils' enjoyment of school.
- All pupils have an equal chance of success and there is no discrimination. Disadvantaged pupils benefit greatly from additional activities tailored to their individual needs. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively and its impact is clear from the narrowing of the gaps in attainment between these pupils and others.
- Sports funding has been used well to provide specialist training for staff. This has helped teachers to gain greater confidence with the subject. There are increased opportunities for pupils to try new activities, such as learning to ride a bicycle. An extended range of activities, combined with a larger choice of sporting clubs, promotes healthier lifestyles for pupils well.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Links with parents of children in the Nursery and reception classes are particularly strong. Parents throughout the school contribute well to their children's learning, especially in helping them to read.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements.
- The local authority knows the school well and the adviser reviews aspects of its work termly. She has recently supported the school with training that has helped drive through school improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors are well led by an experienced Chair of the Governing Body. They have good expertise and a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs improvement. They ask challenging questions to check that improvement is based on accurate analysis of data about pupils' attainment and progress. They support the headteacher to make sure that only teaching that enables pupils to achieve well is rewarded and underperformance is tackled. Governors keep up to date with training on important matters such as safeguarding, so that national requirements are met. They make sure the school promotes tolerance and respect for others. Governors keep a careful eye on pupil premium spending to ensure it helps disadvantaged pupils to achieve as well as others. They check that sports

funding provides pupils with more opportunities to take part in sporting activities.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes towards their work are consistently positive and contribute greatly to their good personal development.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes develop good social skills right from the start. They respond quickly to instructions and older children help their younger friends to settle quickly into school life.
- Pupils throughout the school are well mannered and considerate towards each other. In lessons, they work happily by themselves, with partners or in groups.
- Pupils are keen to do their best. They speak enthusiastically about how much they enjoy their lessons, especially writing. They recognise how much their work has improved.
- Staff, parents and pupils are confident that most pupils behave well. The few pupils who present challenging behaviour are effectively supported, allowing them to take a full part in school life.
- Older pupils take their responsibilities, such as becoming 'playground buddies', very seriously. They develop into confident individuals by the time they leave. On occasions, such as 'Praise Assembly', pupils of all ages are not afraid to talk to the whole school when receiving their awards for good behaviour.
- Playtimes are good social occasions where pupils mix together harmoniously. Occasionally, the behaviour of a few pupils is a little boisterous, particularly at lunchtimes.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents are rightly confident that the school keeps their children safe. Records show that incidents of bullying are rare and that they are quickly dealt with by experienced staff. In discussion, pupils have a good awareness of the different kinds of bullying and know exactly who to go to if they have concerns. They are confident that what they say will be taken seriously.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They recognise potential dangers, including when using computers and the internet.
- The rise in attendance levels in 2014 has been a real success story. At the time of the inspection, attendance was above average. Tenacious monitoring of absence has played a major part in the improvement. Greater support for the families of pupils who might be in danger of slipping behind by not attending has also brought positive results.

The quality of teaching is good

- Better teaching is at the heart of this school's success. It is not difficult to see why attainment in writing is above average because it is taught really well. The teaching of reading is good and has led to improved achievement, particularly in the development of pupils' phonic skills. The teaching of mathematics is generally good, but has some weaknesses which the school is addressing.
- Teachers extend pupils' writing skills well through, for example, history work on Samuel Pepys. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were highly motivated to write at length because they had enjoyed their work so much. They were impressively knowledgeable about dates and events surrounding the Great Fire of London. As a result, they produced some high quality writing.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, staff focus their attention on developing children's spoken English very effectively. Children who initially speak little or no English quickly gain the confidence to speak in simple phrases.
- Teachers plan interesting and engaging activities that promote good learning. They expect pupils to work hard and behave well. They also encourage pupils to assess for themselves how well they have understood what they have been taught. This is an effective part of the school's work because pupils know how much progress they have made and this motivates them to work hard.
- Teachers assess pupils' progress more regularly than in the past. Each half term, they provide an assessment of each pupil's progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They then use the information to monitor pupils who might fall behind. This has contributed to the rise in attainment.
- The adult support for disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language is sharply focused and effective. Work is tightly monitored and progress is often very rapid because good staffing ratios mean the pupils who are most in need get one-to-one attention.
- Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The extra help they get in the classroom and at other times is effective because it focuses well on the individual needs of each pupil. Many of these pupils make better than expected progress from their different starting points.
- Sometimes teachers miss opportunities to use support staff's time more effectively to extend pupils' skills or embed understanding.
- Occasionally, the most-able pupils do not receive demanding enough activities. They waste time on work that is too easy or they are not provided with challenging work right from the start of lessons. This is particularly the case in mathematics.
- The day to day marking of mathematics' work is weaker than that of writing. Pupils do not have clear enough guidance on how to improve and the most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to develop their skills further. In addition, pupils are sometimes held back by their lack of basic mathematical skills.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills that, overall, are typical for their age. However, early language skills are weak. All children make good progress throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage. Last year, an above-average proportion achieved a good level of development by the end of Reception.
- Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 because they are taught well. During Year 2, pupils' progress accelerates through high quality teaching. In 2014, pupils in Year 2 reached above-average standards in reading and writing and average standards in mathematics. This represented good progress of pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, given the limited language skills of some pupils on entry.
- Attainment has not always been as high. In 2012 and 2013, there was a decline to average levels. This dip was mainly linked to inconsistencies in teaching and to the rise in the number of pupils with English as an additional language. Senior leaders recognised that the school needed to focus on improving pupils' language and literacy skills. They knew that the quality of teaching also needed to improve. Both of these were accomplished successfully.
- Through good quality training and effective monitoring of teachers' performance, staff have gained greater confidence with teaching reading and writing. The teaching of phonics has greatly improved. Pupils are encouraged to read more regularly at home and in school. The impact can be seen in the school's improved results in the national Year 1 phonics screening check in 2014.
- Achievement in writing is good. New initiatives were introduced to encourage pupils, particularly boys, to become very confident young writers. Some individual pupils make outstanding progress. As a result, a

greater proportion of pupils now make very good progress in writing throughout the school.

- The progress of disadvantaged pupils compares very favourably with that of other pupils in the school, and with other pupils nationally. In 2014, at the end of Year 2, these pupils were nearly a term ahead of their classmates in reading, half a term ahead in writing but half a term behind in mathematics. When compared with pupils nationally, they attained above the national average in reading and writing but below in mathematics.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is always at least good. These pupils have very positive attitudes and want to succeed. The support they receive is carefully directed and helps them to achieve well. In Year 2, some of these pupils make outstanding progress.
- Until recently, the most-able pupils did not always make as much progress as they should, particularly in mathematics. The recent reorganisation of older pupils into groups means that the most able pupils are now starting to benefit from more demanding work. Other initiatives to extend their mathematical skills have not been in place long enough to show results.
- To some extent, mathematics has taken a back seat while the school focused its attention on raising attainment in English. Currently, there are clear signs of improvement but too few pupils reach higher levels. This is partly due to teachers not expecting enough of the most-able pupils and partly due to pupils not having secure enough calculation and problem solving skills. Some initiatives to improve pupils' mathematical understanding have not been in place long enough to have had a full impact on attainment.

The early years provision is good

- The good quality provision for the school's youngest pupils found at the time of the previous inspection has been maintained. By the time children move into Year 1, they are keen to learn and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Through consistently good teaching, children make rapid progress. Despite some children only being in the Nursery a few weeks, a calm atmosphere prevails and there is much laughter and enjoyment of learning. Routines are already well established and children learn to wait their turn, make sensible choices and share. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, all staff seize the opportunity to provide individual children with the activities they need to achieve well. Occasionally, however, there is not enough to challenge the most-able children.
- The quality of teamwork, particularly in the Nursery class, is very good and contributes well to the good progress that children make. Children with little spoken English or those that join the school in the Reception class quickly gain the confidence they need to succeed because they know there is always an adult who will help them.
- Changes to the teaching of reading have already had a positive impact on standards further up the school. Children start to develop reading and writing skills much earlier than in the past so that they move into Year 1 with the secure foundations for future development.
- Children know that they are expected to behave well. Parents speak highly about staff's expectations. They value the information they receive about their child's progress. They also appreciate the chances they are given to be involved in their child's learning right from the start. Many parents play a major part in helping their children to develop a love of reading.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Activities are well organised, resources are used effectively and children's progress is carefully monitored.

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	103896
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	449282

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Caroline Handley
Headteacher	Andrea Day
Date of previous school inspection	16 November 2010
Telephone number	0121 3571603
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