

Lickey Hills Primary School and Nursery

Old Birmingham Road, Rednal, Birmingham, B45 8EU

Inspection dates 19–20 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 school is strongly led by a headteacher with high aspirations and expectations for continual improvement of school performance. She is effectively supported by equally ambitious senior leaders and a skilled governing body.
- Pupils enjoy school, are confident and articulate, behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. They are well-prepared for their future lives and have a well-developed understanding of British society.
- Pupils throughout the school are kept safe and well-looked after.
- Teaching is good in all year groups, and sometimes outstanding, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and there is mutual respect between them.
- Children enjoy a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They learn quickly and develop confident social skills because of good teaching.
- Pupils achieve well in all year groups. By the time they leave in Year 6, high proportions reach above average standards in writing, mathematics, reading, grammar and science.
- Pupils in the Speech and Language Base make good progress in their learning and are well integrated into many learning activities in the main school.
- The provision for science is good.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' skills in phonics (the sounds letters make), are inconsistent through the school because not all have phonics learning activities matched to their particular needs.
- There are not enough resources and equipment on the school's main playground for pupils to enjoy a variety of purposeful physical activities.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 25 lessons. Five of these were seen jointly with the headteacher.
- As part of a pilot study, science was inspected by a specialist inspector.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, staff with leadership responsibilities and six governors. An inspector also spoke to an officer of the local authority on the telephone.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- There were 104 responses to Parent View, the online questionnaire for parents. Inspectors also examined the school's own regular surveys of parents' responses and spoke to a number of parents in school. Inspectors considered two letters from parents and spoke to one parent on the telephone.
- The inspectors considered the 38 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's self-evaluation and development plans, and an analysis of pupils' achievement and progress. Safeguarding arrangements, policies and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching were examined.

Inspection team

Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julie Fox

Additional Inspector

Rowena Green

Additional Inspector

Brian Cartwright

Her Majesty's Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- About seven out of 10 pupils are White British. The remainder come from a range of minority ethnic heritages. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, about one in seven, is below that found in most schools.
- The school has a Speech and Language Base, which is accessed at present by 17 pupils from Worcestershire and Birmingham.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, about one in 25, is well below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school has a Nursery which most children attend full-time. A small number attend part-time. There are two full-time Reception classes, and twelve other single-aged classes, two in each year.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2013.
- The school has a wide range of development links to other schools in the Bromsgrove area.
- There is a privately run before and after school club on the school site, which was not inspected, and the school provides a number of after-school activities and sports clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' phonic skills across the schools in order to raise further their skills in reading, writing and spelling.
- Make the main playground more stimulating and enjoyable for pupils, including their involvement in the selection and provision of a wider range of play equipment.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has shown great resilience and determination in her leadership of the school for the last year. She has encouraged the staff and governing body to share her high ambitions and aspirations for the school.
- As a result, a number of changes have been made, especially to the leadership structure and teaching, most of which are leading to improvement in the school's performance. The good achievement of pupils has been maintained and standards are starting to rise even higher. The high standard of care for pupils, including those in the speech and language base, and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is also being sustained.
- Changes in management responsibilities have resulted in opportunities being given to newly appointed senior and middle managers. Whilst most have only recently been in post, they are all responding speedily and positively, boosting morale throughout the staff. As a result, the school is showing a good potential for further improvement.
- The robust monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders has boosted teachers' skills, especially when they have moved to teach year groups with which they were not previously familiar.
- Leaders have improved teachers' understanding and use of data about pupils' progress. This is reinforcing the planning for further improvement. This has helped, especially in improving the progress of disadvantaged pupils and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, because support is now more effectively related to the personal targets of pupils.
- School leaders have a realistic and accurate understanding of the school's performance which provides the basis for its detailed medium and long-term planning.
- The school's imaginative development of the new curriculum is contributing positively to pupils' enjoyment of learning and their continuing improvement in achievement. Their wide range of interests is consistently encouraged by the school as was observed in an excellent 'achievement' assembly. In this assembly pupils showed great confidence in speaking to the whole of Key Stage 2 about their many accomplishments. These included successes in several sports including golf, gymnastics and judo; a stunning water colour painted by a pupil; a delightful piece of piano-playing; and an astounding demonstration of taekwondo by another pupil, which produced gasps of astonishment from pupils, parents and staff.
- These learning activities make a particularly effective contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
- The effective use of additional sports funding is also enhancing pupils' interest in sport in the school and in competition with others, as well as building knowledge of working in teams. With the guidance of the leader of physical education and more training opportunities, teachers are also becoming more confident in their teaching of sports.
- The school promotes equal opportunities well, and the school's inclusivity is shown by the continual encouragement to pupils in the language resources unit to join in activities in the main school as often as possible. There is no discrimination in the school, and pupils are respectful and take pride in their achievements.
- The local authority provides effective support mainly at the request of the school, as the school's performance and leadership is well-regarded.
- The school is developing an increasingly wider range of helpful links with other local schools and a school 'pyramid' in Bromsgrove. This is giving pupils more learning opportunities and teachers have more opportunities to work with others.

- The school has a good partnership with parents who support the school and their children strongly. Only a very small number of parents express concerns about aspects of the school.

■ The governance of the school:

- Following a restructuring of the governing body, governors have a much improved knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for further development.
- Under the shrewd leadership of the Chair, the considerable skills of the governors have been carefully utilised to best effect for the benefit of different aspects of the school.
- The governors confidently analyse data about the school's performance and keep a very close control over school finances. They combine this with links to the various school leaders and offer them consistent challenge and questioning about performance.
- Consequently, the pay committee has a good knowledge of the quality of teaching, particularly in relation to pupils' performance and teachers' targets, and can take measured and informed decisions on pay awards.
- Governors monitor the spending of the pupil premium rigorously and are able to compare the performance of these pupils with that of other pupils. They also have a good knowledge of how sports funding is allocated and how pupils benefit.
- The governing body ensures that safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements and monitor regularly the safety of pupils. All school policies, especially with regard to child protection, are regularly monitored.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' attitudes to learning are enthusiastic and positive in all year groups and in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They behave well in lessons and around the school, are polite and respectful to adults and show good care and concern for each other.
- They behave and play happily together in the large playground. However, there are insufficient play resources outside, or separate areas for specific activities. As a result, the few incidents concerning unacceptable behaviour in the school usually occur on the playground at lunchtimes.
- Pupils throughout the school talk animatedly about their activities. These include, writing about alien invasions in Year 5, using 'Bus Stop' methods to learn in mathematics, role-playing a Member of Parliament, and from many, their residential stay at an adventure camp.
- Pupils talk about how well they think they are prepared for their High Schools. They have a strong awareness of their place in the British democracy and this contributes well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the relatively new school behaviour expectations. They talk in detail about red and yellow cards and letters home, 'especially about bad language'. They say that their parents 'will always know' because of the reply slips they have to complete. Parents themselves, and staff, are almost unanimous in their responses that behaviour is good and well-managed by the school.
- They are very confident that they do well in their learning. As one commented, 'I am really confident in doing my work, especially in maths, because the teachers encourage us'. They are also analytical about their learning and know what subjects they like and do not like.
- Attendance is above average and has been for a number of years. The school is vigilant about the punctuality of pupils. There have been no exclusions in recent times.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils have good relationships with staff and are

confident that they have adults to turn to in times of difficulty.

- The school works effectively with external support agencies and professionals in supporting families and children who may be at risk of not doing so well. The school has benefitted in this provision by the appointment of a learning mentor.
- Pupils behave safely around the large school site. This is especially apparent in their often vigorous physical activities, and in the exciting practical activities they enjoy in science. They are proud to be appointed as door monitors and ensure that 'all doors are closed behind you'.
- Pupils understand bullying well and say that there is little bullying in school. As one said, 'It's only a couple of people, and that's because they're not very happy with themselves'. Older pupils are well aware of the dangers of bullying on the internet and through social media.
- The school is fully inclusive and there are no recent reports of any racism.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is consistently good in the school, across all year groups including the Early Years Foundation Stage. There are also regular examples of outstanding learning being made in some classes. The teaching has been improving strongly as a result of effective and regular monitoring by senior staff, strongly led by the headteacher.
- Effective teaching is resulting in the sustained good attainment and progress of pupils, including in literacy, reading and mathematics. The examples of outstanding learning in the school is characterised by the high expectations of the teachers and their excellent subject knowledge.
- The improvement of teaching over time is evident in pupils' books and in the stimulating displays of pupils' work around the school. This includes many good quality examples of their writing and experiments in science.
- Teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils to listen carefully to their instructions, and to check pupils' understanding of their learning through effective questioning on a regular basis. Particularly good examples of this were observed in Year 6 when pupils were learning about parallel, perpendicular and intersecting lines in a geometry lesson; and also in Year 5, where pupils learned how to use hyphens (dashes) accurately in their writing.
- Teachers also set high standards of expectation for pupils' presentation of their work which, as a result, is usually neat and accurate. Marking is also generally helpful with a good balance of praise and future learning points for pupils. Pupils are learning how they can respond to written comments and also develop their own critical skills by commenting on the work of their classmates.
- Leaders have rightly identified weaknesses in the teaching of phonics. Not all teachers are confident in their teaching of these skills and pupils have not been reaching the levels of understanding expected of them. This has led to some inconsistencies in pupils' attainment in reading over time.
- Teachers work well with their teaching assistants. Teaching assistants were frequently observed during the inspection assessing and recording the progress of individual pupils, and also making contributions to lessons about the learning of different pupils or groups.
- Teachers are increasingly proficient in promoting the development of literacy and numeracy skills across a wide range of subjects. This was observed, for example, in pupils' work about Australia, Enterprise, and the Solar System.

The achievement of pupils is good

- For several years pupils' attainment has been generally above average at the end of year 6, with occasional slight variations, in reading, writing and mathematics. Similarly attainment by the end of Year 2 has also been above average for several years in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress in all year groups and achieve well. Many pupils are working at levels above those expected for their age. This was confirmed during the inspection by observations of pupils at work and their work in books over the last year.
- However, pupils' skills and knowledge of phonics is a weakness. Attainment in the national phonics check in 2014 was below average. The school leadership has taken steps to remedy this which include the introduction of new strategies and resources, and there are some early signs of improvement.
- Achievement, although varying slightly in different subjects year-on-year, is consistently good for all groups of pupils in both key stages. A considerable bank of evidence indicates that pupils also make good progress in science, because of good teaching and practical activities which encourage good learning. The overall effectiveness of science in the school is good.
- Most-able pupils achieve well. In 2014 for example, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 reaching high standards in writing, mathematics, grammar and spelling was above average, and this trend is continuing. Not as many pupils reached such high levels in reading, but as a result of school action, many more pupils than in the past are reaching high levels of reading now.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and pupils from the speech and language base, make good progress throughout the school. This is because the staff have a good knowledge of the progress of all pupils and adapt this in their planning, and also because pupils are well integrated as often as possible into mainstream classes.
- In the last three years, there have been too few disadvantaged pupils to comment on their attainment without risk of identifying individual children. However, the few pupils supported by the extra funding make good progress, particularly in Key Stage 1. Although the progress of the majority of these pupils in reading, writing and mathematics compares favourably with that of other pupils in the school and nationally, there remains a gap in attainment between them and other pupils.
- Pupils are enthusiastic readers and, apart from books, particularly enjoy reading and commenting upon each other's efforts in writing in literacy. Pupils talk about regular visits to the school and public libraries. In spite of the past weaknesses in phonic skills, most pupils are making good progress in reading because of more effective support from staff.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership and management are good. The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has settled in quickly. With the help of the headteacher she is already transforming the outdoor areas to provide a more stimulating learning environment for the children. The staff work effectively together enabling children to make good progress.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and experience typically seen for their age. Children make good and sometimes outstanding progress in improving most of their skills. This is because they have a wide choice of activities indoors and out. They greatly enjoy their learning, especially as staff often join in with their play activities, and ask them challenging questions.
- Their good progress continues in the Reception classes. Children are well-supported in their learning, and routines and expectations are firmly established. Children rapidly become articulate and talk about their learning as they develop their self-confidence.

- Good teaching enables children to develop their skills rapidly. By the time they enter Year 1 their attainment in reading, number work, and their personal development are above those found normally at their age. Their writing, though, is an area which leaders have identified as needing further development.
- Teachers and their effective teaching assistants work closely together to assess children's progress and are planning their future learning successfully as a result.
- Children are kept safe and secure. They behave well in all their activities, even though they become excited and exuberant in some of them. They are well prepared for their transition between classes.
- Staff constantly engage with parents, particularly in working together to help the learning of their children. Parents are very pleased with the start their children make in 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	116773
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	448497

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	432
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Duncan Edwards
Headteacher	Amanda Salisbury
Date of previous school inspection	19 October 2009
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