

Heathfield Primary School

Heathfield Road, Birmingham, B19 1HJ

Inspection dates

18–19 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- By the time pupils leave the school they are at levels below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because over time, teaching has not been good enough to ensure pupils make the progress of which they are capable.
- The quality of teaching is improving rapidly but not enough is consistently good or outstanding.
- A significant proportion of pupils in Years 4 and 5 are well below the level expected for their age in writing.
- In some lessons, the more able pupils are not consistently provided with challenging enough work or moved on to something more difficult quickly enough.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage requires improvement because the activities provided for pupils are not sufficiently focussed to allow children to develop and apply new skills. Teaching assistants have not yet achieved the balance between observing and assessing children and then intervening in their activities to help them to find out new things.
- When pupils learn a new skill in spelling, punctuation or grammar, they do not have opportunities to practise it in their writing before moving onto a new skill. This prevents them from showing that they can apply what they have learned.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have made a strong and sustained start in improving the school. They are resolute and determined in their work to remove any obstacles that will prevent pupils from continuing to make increasingly rapid progress.
- Leaders have a precise and accurate understanding of the stage of improvement the school is at. They are monitoring the quality of teaching rigorously and are fully aware of what is needed to ensure that it is at least good.
- Pupils are now making faster progress and are catching up, term by term, with the levels expected for their age. This is because teaching is improving. Some is good.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development forms the basis of the curriculum and is a strong feature of the school.
- Leaders' work to ensure pupils' good behaviour is successful. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and that it is a safe place in which to learn and play. They get along well together, are polite and behave well around school.
- Leaders' work has ensured that the procedures for keeping pupils safe are excellent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 32 lessons or parts of lessons, six of which were undertaken jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the head of school, senior and middle leaders, four representatives from the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils, listened to them read and observed them during playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to pupils informally around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View), a telephone call from a parent and the 24 replies to the staff questionnaire. The views of parents were also sought at the beginning and the end of the school day. The views of staff were also sought when inspectors provided feedback to them after lesson observations.
- The inspection team reviewed a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, safeguarding policies, records of training, minutes of meetings, information about pupils’ progress and records relating to pupils’ behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Rachel Howie, Lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Peter Humphries	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Judith Long	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, at three pupils in ten, is above average.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in care).
- Almost all of the pupils are from Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage. This is a much higher proportion than average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The 2014 end of Key Stage 2 results show that the school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- This school became part of a federation with Prince Albert Primary School on 1 February 2014. From that time, an executive headteacher was appointed across the federation and each school has its own head of school.
- There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection.
- A local authority review, and a report from the Government Standards and Testing Agency, both concluded that the Key Stage 1 and 2 test results prior to 2013 may not be accurate. Inspectors took these conclusions into account when assessing the data on the progress of pupils from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on improvements in teaching to raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - pupils have frequent opportunities in punctuation, spelling and grammar lessons to apply the skills they have learned, to their writing
 - work provides sufficient challenge for the more able pupils
 - the good and outstanding practice already in place continues to be shared within the school.
- Ensure that pupils currently in Years 4 and 5 continue to make rapid progress in their writing to enable them to reach at least the level expected for their age.
- Improve the provision for children in Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the activities that are provided for children always have a specific focus to enable children to learn and apply new skills
 - ensuring that the learning environment provides children with prompts to help them in their learning
 - keeping parents well informed about the progress their children are making and enabling parents to contribute to their children's learning journals
 - supporting teaching assistants to achieve the balance between observing and assessing children; and intervening in their activities to help them to find out new things.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels are effective, energetic and organised and are driving forward improvements at a rapid pace. The executive head has a clear vision for the pupils at Heathfield Primary and has high expectations of staff and pupils alike. The leaders and managers work together well as a team and the vision for improvement is shared and promoted by almost all staff. The recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made a good start in introducing changes which are beginning to have an impact. The school plan accurately identifies the key areas for improvement and actions are well planned and checked effectively. Staff morale has improved, as demonstrated by the overwhelmingly positive staff questionnaire responses.
- Leaders and governors have responded quickly and effectively to the recommendations made in the inspections in November 2013 and May 2014. For example, staff and governors have been trained in identifying the potential risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and have suitable procedures in place that are understood by staff. Staff are also vigilant for indications of a range of factors which put pupils at risk, for example, female genital mutilation, forced marriage and domestic violence.
- Leaders have rightly focussed on improving the quality of teaching. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching in the school. Effective coaching is in place for teachers whose practice requires improvement and for those teachers new to the profession. Leaders provide precise and helpful feedback to teachers after they have observed lessons. The assistant headteachers check pupils' books on a weekly basis, set improvement targets for teachers and then go back to check the following week to ensure that the improvements have been made. As a result teaching continues to improve. Leaders also have robust and effective systems to monitor the attendance of pupils and their behaviour.
- The additional sports funding has been used to employ a director of sport across the federation of schools. She has been effective in increasing the level of physical activity at lunchtime and improving pupils' access to competitive sports. Pupils have achieved significant sporting success in netball, cricket and football in local and national competitions.
- The pupil premium funding has been used wisely to provide a good range of focussed support for the eligible pupils. This spending is analysed and reviewed regularly to ensure it is helping pupils to make rapid progress. As a result the gap between eligible pupils and their classmates is closing in most year groups.
- The school effectively promotes tolerance and respect for people's differences. In the religious education programme and elsewhere, pupils learn about different values such as honesty, tolerance, respect and forgiveness and have opportunities to learn how people of different faiths apply these values in their lives. Through the programme of personal, social and health education, pupils learn how to apply skills such as team work, managing feelings, making choices and taking risks, into their everyday lives. This work contributes to the way in which the school community work and play well together.
- The curriculum meets the recently-introduced requirements and covers all the subjects expected in a primary school. Leaders have ensured that it is underpinned by the need to ensure pupils are well prepared for adult life in modern Britain. Pupils say that most lessons are fun and interesting and inspectors observed positive attitudes to learning in almost all lessons. The curriculum contributes well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding which is a strong feature of this school.
- The school keeps parents well informed through regular newsletters. Support is available for those parents who do not speak English. Regular workshops are held to help parents to understand how they can help their children at home. The majority of parents who spoke with inspectors are supportive of the school and would recommend it to others. However, there is a small group who remain dissatisfied with the school's work. Inspectors found no evidence to support their concerns.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding are extremely thorough and exceed all statutory requirements. Procedures and policies are well thought out, staff are well informed and leaders are

persistent when following up concerns with other agencies.

- The local authority has contracted out the monitoring of the school to the local teaching school. This work has only recently begun. The representative is knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has appropriate plans in place to hold the school to account for its progress towards being judged as good.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governance of the school has improved. Governors are knowledgeable about the areas of strength and weakness and know how the school compares to others nationally.
- Minutes from meetings show that governors ask searching questions of school leaders to satisfy themselves that appropriate improvements are being made. They also have systems in place to find out for themselves first-hand about the work that the leaders are doing. For example, visits are made to check on safeguarding arrangements and to look at pupils' books.
- Governors are fully involved in deciding if there is sufficient evidence for staff to move to the next level of the pay scale and ensure that the performance management procedures are appropriate. They are well informed about the quality of teaching in the school.
- Records show that the governors take seriously their responsibilities to manage the finances carefully and to keep pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils in all classes is good. Parents, pupils and almost all staff agree. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, they listen to the adults and are keen to learn new things. They are polite and friendly. The class greeters are proud of their role and take seriously their job to welcome visitors to the classroom and explain what they are learning. This and other responsibilities such as sport leaders, peer mediators and prefects encourage a sense of pride in the school.
- Playtimes and lunchtimes are busy, sociable and active times of the day. Play activities are extremely well organised by the 'Green Ps' and pupils enjoy a wide range of games. They play well together in mixed gender and age groupings.
- The effective personal, social and health education and religious education lessons help pupils to respect one another's differences and care for one another. An inspector observed several older pupils rush to help a younger pupil when she fell over in the playground.
- Attendance has improved steadily over the last 18 months and is in line with the national average for primary schools. The number of pupils who are persistently absent from school has reduced during this period. This is because the school leaders have effective procedures in place to check on the attendance of individual and groups of pupils and also to reward pupils if they attend well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. All pupils who spoke with inspectors said that school is a safe and secure place to play and learn. Pupils trust the adults to sort out squabbles when they arise and look after them if they get hurt.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe when swimming, crossing the road and when using the internet. Pupils could explain that it is important not to give out personal information, make friends online with someone not known to them or visit websites unsuitable for children their age.
- Pupils have been taught effectively about bullying. They can identify different forms of bullying including physical, emotional, cyber and racist. All pupils who spoke to inspectors said that bullying does not happen at Heathfield Primary but if it did the adults would take a zero tolerance approach.

The quality of teaching**requires improvement**

- While teaching is improving strongly, it is not yet consistently good across the full range of subjects and in all classes. In addition, there has been a significant turnover of staff, with many teachers new to the school in September, with six of these being new to the teaching profession. Therefore, although school information shows that progress significantly accelerated last year, this has not yet been sustained over a long enough period of time for pupils to catch up to their peers in other schools.
- Teachers too often underestimate the standards which pupils are capable of reaching within the lesson. Although all teachers plan work at different levels of difficulty for pupils of different abilities, some teachers are not yet skilled in moving pupils on to more difficult work as soon as they are ready. Teachers do not always get the level of difficulty right at the beginning of the lesson for the most able pupils.
- In mathematics pupils are taught new skills and then given the opportunity to apply them in a real life and interesting context. For example, as cricket is a very popular sport in the school, pupils in Year 6 used their mathematical skills to solve problems relating to cricket scores. This helps pupils to engage with their learning and to make good progress. In writing, pupils are taught grammar, punctuation and spelling skills on a daily basis and in a practical and fun way. However, within these lessons pupils have too few opportunities to apply these skills in their writing. This limits the progress that they make.
- The teaching of phonics (the sounds letters make) is improving as a result of effective coaching and training from the phonics leader. Most lessons are planned well and involve engaging activities for the pupils. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and teaching assistants are well-directed. Some inconsistencies remain in the Reception classes.
- Teachers' marking is effective because, as a result of their comments, pupils move forward in their learning. Teachers provide pupils with information about what they have done well and about what they can do to improve. They show the pupils an example of how their work could be improved and this leads to improvements. Marking in Year 6 and Year 1 is excellent.
- Teaching assistants provide pupils with a good level of support because they have been well briefed on the purpose of the lesson and understand what pupils are expected to learn. Where learning is most effective teachers and teaching assistants ask pupils questions such as, 'Tell me more about...' and, 'How do you know...?'. These questions require pupils to think carefully about their answers and help them to make good progress.
- Where teaching is good, particularly in Years 1, 2 and 6, teachers set work at the right level of difficulty for all pupils. Teachers move learning forward as soon as pupils are ready and pupils are visibly enthusiastic and excited to succeed. In these year groups teachers are skilled at planning opportunities for pupils to practice their writing and mathematical skills in subjects such as history, science and religious education. Their marking in these subjects is detailed and thorough and helps pupils to move forward in their writing as well as in the other subjects.

The achievement of pupils**requires improvement**

- Achievement requires improvement because the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Key Stages 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics is below the national average. Too few pupils achieve the higher levels. While the results achieved by the Year 2 and Year 6 pupils at the end of 2014 represent a considerable improvement from the previous year, the legacy of previous underachievement has not been fully overcome.
- By the end of Year 6 in 2014 an increased number of pupils made good progress compared with the previous year, particularly in writing, but the proportion in mathematics and reading do not yet compare favourably with national averages.
- In each year group there is a larger than expected proportion of pupils who are not at the level expected for their age. This is particularly evident in Years 4 and 5 in writing. School tracking information and

evidence from pupils' books, shows that term by term an increasing number of pupils are catching up.

- In the most recent screening check for phonics, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard was below the national average. Some improvement has been made from the previous year. This is because the teaching of phonics is improving.
- Almost all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making increasingly good progress. This is because their needs are identified accurately and appropriate support is put in place.
- Too few pupils achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is partly because, in some classes, the teacher underestimates the ability of the more-able pupils and is not ambitious enough for what they are able to achieve.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium were half a term behind their classmates in writing, a term behind in reading and three terms behind in mathematics. Compared with other pupils nationally, their attainment was also lower. School tracking information shows that these pupils are making better progress than in the past and the gaps between them and their classmates is closing.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The early years provision requires improvement because teaching is not consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make as much progress as they should.
- Most children join the early years with skills and knowledge that are generally well below those typical for their age. Fewer children than nationally acquire the early reading, writing and mathematics skills they need at the start of Key Stage 1.
- The recently appointed leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has an accurate view of where improvements need to be made and has begun to make changes to the provision. She is receiving a good level of support to ensure she can be effective in this role.
- The records of children's learning (learning journals) which include photographs and assessments are thorough. They are stored electronically and there is no system in place for parents to be able to see these or contribute to them. Staff frequently capture information about children's learning to add it to the learning journals, however, teaching assistants have not yet achieved the balance between observing and assessing children; and intervening in their activities to help them to find out new things. As a result children do not make as much progress as they could.
- The learning environment in Early Years Foundation Stage is interesting and attractive and the children are provided with an extensive range of activities to choose from. However, these activities are not sufficiently focussed on developing and extending children's skills effectively. The outdoor provision for the Reception classes is less well developed than indoors. Additionally there are too few prompts around the classrooms for pupils to refer to, for example, when they are practising their writing or their number work.
- Routines are well established within the classrooms, however, the volume of activities that are made available to children in Reception prolongs tidying up and is not the most effective use of time.
- Children are happy in the early years and get along well together. Behaviour is good and adults are good role models. Inspectors observed children in Reception working together to build a train and negotiating with one another about the best way to do this. Similarly pupils were working together on completing a jigsaw, helping one another to fit the pieces together accurately. Children are confident to choose activities and use the resources creatively and imaginatively.

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	103329
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	452283

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Najma Razaq
Headteacher (Head of School)	Nigel Oram
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2013
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