

# Highfields Primary School

Beeches Road, Rowley Regis, B65 0DA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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 inspiration and drive of the headteacher, and a very effective senior leadership team, have ensured that teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders have an accurate view of pupils' progress throughout the school because of their effective checking and monitoring procedures. They make sure that additional and timely support is provided for any pupil identified as falling behind.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught and cared for well. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points.
- The curriculum develops pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness well and prepares them for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. They are polite, respectful and keen to learn. They are well cared for, and enjoy good relationships with adults and other pupils.
- The school has good procedures for safeguarding. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Attendance has improved and is now above the national average.
- Governors provide a very effective level of support and challenge, and are ambitious for further improvement.
- Most parents and carers are very happy with the quality of education and care provided for their children.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always use information from assessments, including their marking, to provide learning activities that build on pupils' skills and knowledge, particularly of the most able.
- Teachers do not consistently give clear feedback or guidance that will help pupils improve. They do not always check that pupils act on the advice they are given through marking.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons or parts of lessons across all year groups present in the school. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings and discussions took place with the headteacher, other senior leaders, five members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, and two groups of pupils.
- A wide range of other documentation was looked at, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, data about pupils' achievement, progress and attendance, and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, talked with them in lessons and evaluated a large sample of their work.
- Inspectors examined the documents and procedures relating to the safeguarding and safety of pupils.
- The 37 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the views of parents gathered when they were bringing their children to school, were taken into account. The inspectors also took into account the 45 responses to the staff survey.

## Inspection team

Michael Appleby, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Carol Eyley	Additional Inspector
Michael Onyon	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- The Nursery class offers up to 30 part-time places for three-year-old children in the mornings and 30 places for afternoons. At the time of the inspection there are 29 children attending in the mornings and 23 attending in the afternoons.
- Around 70% of pupils are from White British backgrounds; 10% are of Pakistani heritage and the remaining pupils are from various minority ethnic backgrounds. About one in eight of the pupils are learning English as an additional language.
- The pupil premium provides support for about one quarter of pupils in the school. This additional funding is used to support pupils who are disadvantaged because they are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about 1 in 8 pupils. This is broadly in line with the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school manages an early morning breakfast club.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise attainment by ensuring that teachers:
  - use the information from assessment to provide activities for pupils, especially the most able, that build on their skills and knowledge throughout the lesson
  - mark work so that pupils know what to do to improve their work, and check that pupils act on the guidance they are given.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The determined leadership of the headteacher is at the heart of this successful and well-regarded school. She has developed a highly effective leadership team. Together, they guide the work of the school exceptionally well.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate and is used effectively to determine appropriate targets for further development. These targets are regularly evaluated by senior managers and governors, and so the school is continuing to improve and move forward.
- Regular checks made by senior and other leaders on teaching and pupils' learning contribute fully to the school's accurate self-evaluation. Areas for improvement are identified and actions taken, such as the changes made to the teaching of letter sounds which raised achievement in this area by 42% over two years. The regular reviews of pupils' progress enable leaders to target extra help to pupils.
- Senior leaders set teachers challenging targets regarding the achievement of the pupils in their class. The performance management and training given to teachers, together with the guidance and support provided by senior and subject leaders, is improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- Leaders make regular visits to classrooms to observe lessons, check pupils' work and behaviour, and gauge the extent to which teachers use the information from assessments to plan their lessons. The findings are routinely shared with governors, who use these reports to monitor the work of the school.
- The school has successfully adapted its curriculum to comply with new national requirements. The curriculum is enhanced by interesting visits and experiences, while keeping an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills. Subjects are thoughtfully planned to engage pupils' interest and foster a love of learning.
- The school has made a start to identifying and implementing a preferred approach to assessment following the removal of National Curriculum levels. They have been working closely with other local schools and are currently trialling the new system in mathematics throughout the school.
- Leaders make effective use of the pupil premium funding to help eligible pupils make faster progress. The school employs extra teaching and other staff to work with disadvantaged pupils in small groups or on a one-to-one basis. This has a good impact on the amount of progress being made by these pupils. As well as providing targeted support for learning, the school ensures that these pupils are able to take part in all activities, including music instrument tuition and the residential trip to Portsmouth.
- The school uses its sports premium funding very effectively by employing specialist coaches to work with classroom teachers to develop their teaching skills in gymnastics, games and dance. The funds have also been used to increase the number of pupils having swimming lessons and to run more after-school clubs. There has also been a focus on encouraging pupils to eat healthily and take exercise.
- The school meets all current safeguarding requirements. Staff are well trained in child protection issues and this ensures that there is a high level of care to pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered exceptionally well through the curriculum and the excellent role models presented by staff. The school actively promotes a tolerant appreciation of racial, cultural and religious differences. Pupils develop a good understanding of democratic procedures; for example, by having class elections for members of the school council.
- The local authority has supported the school effectively over time. Recent support has been minimal because pupils make good progress over time at the school.

**■ The governance of the school:**

- Recent changes to the governing body and an increased amount of active involvement have resulted in governors becoming increasingly effective. Together with the headteacher and staff, they track and evaluate school performance and action plans to determine their progress and success. They know about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They know how well the school is doing compared to other schools nationally as they have a good understanding of data.
- Governors have been closely involved in deciding how the pupil premium funding is allocated. They are aware of the impact this has on the progress of eligible pupils. The school budget is monitored carefully and they only approve new spending once they are sure it will benefit pupils educationally.
- Governors diligently oversee the arrangements for the performance management of staff, including that of the headteacher. They ensure that salary increases are only awarded where there is clear evidence that pupils are making good progress. They have had training over the recent past to help them accurately assess the performance of the school and to fulfil their statutory duties more effectively.
- Governors monitor the work of the school to encourage pupils to develop values of respect and tolerance for others, including those whose beliefs and culture are different to their own. They take steps to have good links with parents and listen carefully to their views. For example, the school's homework policy was changed after consultations with parents.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school has a calm and purposeful learning environment. Pupils' behaviour during lessons, lunchtimes, break times, and around the school is friendly, polite and orderly.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning, are enthusiastic, and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. In lessons, pupils work hard, are keen to learn, and they cooperate well with each other. They are polite, courteous and show good manners towards each other and adults.
- Relationships are good. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other in lessons and around the school. In lessons, despite the occasional lack of concentration or off-task behaviour by a very few pupils, low-level disruption is rare and so learning is not affected.
- Effective action has led to an improvement in attendance, which has risen to be above the national average for the last school year. Current attendance figures show that this improvement is being maintained. Persistent absence has been reduced and very few pupils have been excluded in the past two years. Pupils are generally punctual at the start of the school day.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Safeguarding processes are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. All staff follow the policies and procedures consistently well. Access to the school is secure and all visitors are appropriately checked. All staff are rigorously vetted prior to appointment.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what is and is not bullying, and of the different kinds of bullying, including physical bullying, cyber-bullying and persistent name-calling. Pupils say that bullying hardly ever happens at their school. The school's records show that incidents are carefully investigated, logged and any necessary action is promptly taken. Pupils say that adults quickly help to sort out any minor incidents or disagreements.
- The school teaches e-safety well, and pupils explained clearly how to keep themselves safe when online.
- Most parents and carers who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are happy, that pupils behave well, and that the school keeps their children safe. A large majority of parents agree that bullying is rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively. This view is supported by the staff and governors.
- Pupils enjoy attending the well-supervised breakfast club and the activities it provides.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The work seen in this and last year's books shows that the quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and across different subjects. This confirms the picture from the school's own checks on the quality of teaching.
- Most parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire agreed that their child is well taught and makes good progress.
- Consistently good teaching makes sure that all pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work so lessons are orderly and learning proceeds without hindrance. Classrooms are tidy and well organised, with attractive displays that celebrate the quality of pupils' work.
- The progress of pupils is accurately assessed through regular testing and checking of pupils' work. This information is carefully recorded by teachers and used to identify pupils who may be falling behind. Focused teaching or additional adult support is then provided to help these pupils to catch up.
- Teachers are successful in planning tasks that interest and engage pupils so they concentrate well and are keen to succeed. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils listened to Grieg's *Hall of the Mountain King* and then worked with enthusiasm and concentration to successfully create their own percussion compositions. In another lesson, pupils working on computers kept on trying, despite finding it challenging to write a set of instructions to make a given shape.
- The teaching of early reading and writing skills is good. Pupils are taught phonics (letters and the sounds they make) very well and are expected to use them in their reading and writing. Evidence of this was seen in the Reception classes, where some children were writing letters to Santa Claus using letter sounds to spell words.
- Good use is made of skilled teaching assistants, particularly in supporting the specific learning needs of pupils who might otherwise struggle with their work. They are often effective in helping individual pupils, or groups of pupils, to develop their understanding and gain confidence in their ability to do the work. This ensures that all pupils are able to cope with the tasks they are given and are fully included in lessons.
- Most lessons are well planned to cater for the abilities of different groups of pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, sometimes the tasks for the most-able pupils are too easy.
- In some lessons where all pupils are allowed to choose the level of task they work on, some pupils are attempting to do work which is beyond their skills and knowledge and so the teacher has to intervene much more and learning slows.
- Teachers mark work frequently and usually provide pupils with helpful comments. However, teachers do not consistently give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to improve, nor do they check that pupils act on the advice they are given.

**The achievement of pupils is good**

- The good development of literacy and numeracy skills for all pupils ensures that they are ready for the next stage of their learning at secondary school. By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils is in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Most pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress as their command of English grows. Those with Pakistani backgrounds achieve well, as do White British pupils.
- The proportion of pupils meeting the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen over the past two years to be well above the national average. Pupils in Reception, Year 1 and 2 made good use of phonics skills and their knowledge of letter sounds when reading to inspectors. By Year 6,

pupils are enthusiastic and fluent readers who use their skills well in their learning in other subjects.

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics has risen over the past two years. Writing was the equivalent of a term above the national average in 2014 because of improvements in planning and teaching led by the literacy leader.
- The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 has improved over the past two years. The proportions of pupils making expected progress in Key Stage 2 in 2013 and 2014 was in line with the national averages for reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils achieving better than expected progress increased in 2014 and was above the national average for writing and mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Senior leaders ensure that their individual learning needs are assessed accurately and their progress is carefully checked. Extra adults often provide them with a good mix of support, encouragement and challenge in class that helps them cope well with tasks, and so contribute to their good achievement.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good in all subjects. The numbers reaching the higher levels at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 are usually in line with or above the national average in all subjects. The proportion of most-able pupils making expected or better progress are consistently in line with or above the national average.
- The school uses the pupil premium funding to provide teaching support and resources for disadvantaged pupils for whom the funding is intended. The progress made by these pupils in each year group over the past two years has been equal to or better than that of other pupils, and the amount of progress made over a year increased in 2014 from the levels in 2013.
- Results in 2014 showed that disadvantaged pupils did not do as well as their classmates. The gap between their attainment and that of their classmates was wider than it had been in 2013. The reason for this was this group's very low level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1. In reading and in writing, these pupils left the school about four terms behind their classmates and three terms behind pupils nationally. In mathematics, they were two terms behind their classmates and one and half terms behind pupils nationally. In all year groups, disadvantaged pupils are now making progress at least in line with and sometimes at higher rates than their classmates.

### The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management ensure that teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently good. Children feel safe and confident in the setting and are keen to learn. Children are provided with a variety of activities that capture their interests and help them develop a range of skills. The children enjoy the mix of adult-led activities and those that they can choose for themselves.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and abilities that are often at a very early stage of development, particularly in communication, language and literacy. They make very good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, resulting in higher than national average proportions achieving the early learning goals (the standards set for this stage) on entry to Year 1. In 2013 and 2014, the proportion who achieved a good level of development was also above the national average.
- Teachers have a clear grasp of children's stages of development and assess progress accurately, ensuring that activities are set at the right level. Thorough planning ensures that activities enable all children to make good progress. The teaching of reading through sounding out letters and phrases is a particular strength.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking, listening and early reading skills, as was seen when the teacher led a treasure hunt and children were asked to describe objects. However, while working with children on other tasks, adults did not take opportunities to develop children's language skills further by asking them for further description or explanation.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103946
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	448249

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Brian Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Helen Heap
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5591037
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