

Walter Halls Primary and Early Years School

Querneby Road, Mapperley, Nottingham, NG3 5HS

Inspection dates 8–9 January 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Senior leadership lacked stability during 2013 and 2014.
- The new headteacher and other newly appointed school leaders have not had time to have the impact intended on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is not consistently good. There are a few occasions in lessons when low-level disruption by a few pupils is slowing the progress of learning for others.
- Progress is not consistently good across the school because teaching is not sufficiently effective.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Teachers do not use assessment information on pupils' attainment and progress well enough to ensure that all pupils are challenged. This is particularly true of the most-able pupils.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work lacks the detailed guidance necessary to help pupils make better progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher, the senior leadership team and those with leadership responsibilities below senior level are using rigorous procedures to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. They are enthusiastic and beginning to have a positive impact on standards achieved.
- Support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. They make better progress than most pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make better progress than most pupils because they are well supported.
- The children make a good start to their school life in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress and achieve well.
- Progress is improving in the current academic year.
- Pupils and their parents say that they feel safe and secure in school.
- The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, although new in post, are experienced and knowledgeable governors. The governing body has recently had a full and successful external review of its roles. As a result, governors are now better organised and increasingly involved in checking the school's work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons. All classes were observed at least once. The inspectors also observed pupils working in smaller groups. Five of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard pupils read and checked their reading records.
- Meetings were held with members of the teaching staff.
- A meeting was held with the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body. A further meeting was held with another governor.
- A telephone conversation was held with the local authority's officer linked to the school.
- Many discussions took place with pupils both formally and informally in lessons and on the play areas.
- The inspectors took account of the views of 78 parents from Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), and conversations were held with parents at the start and end of the school day. The inspectors also analysed the 42 responses to the questionnaire for staff.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' recent and current progress; planning and monitoring documentation; reports on the quality of teaching over time; records relating to behaviour and attendance; the school's improvement plan; documents relating to safeguarding; and the minutes of various meetings, including those of the governing body.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

John Demmerling

Additional inspector

Lynda Townsend

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is about one in six of the school's population, which is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is just over half of the total number of pupils on roll, which is well above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding provided to schools for pupils in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and more than 20 different heritages are represented.
- One quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The number of pupils arriving and leaving the school is high compared to other schools.
- Children of Nursery age within the Early Years Foundation Stage unit attend school on a part-time basis but all other pupils attend full time.
- The school did not meet the government's current floor standards in 2014, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school operates a well-attended breakfast club and an after-school club for the pupils.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2014. There were three different headteachers in post during 2013-2014.
- The current headteacher has reorganised the senior leadership team and the team of leaders below senior level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders at all levels have the impact intended on improving teaching and pupils' achievement by:
 - checking that the quality of teaching is fully effective in improving pupils' progress and the standards they attain
 - providing continued training for newly appointed leaders so they give full support to senior leaders to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
- Make teaching and pupils' progress consistently good by making sure that:
 - frequent checks on pupils' understanding and progress guide teachers' planning of learning so that expectations of what pupils can achieve are high enough, particularly for the most able and all at Key Stage 1
 - marking gives pupils positive comments and clear advice on how to improve their work
 - teaching maintains pupils' commitment to learning and good behaviour throughout lessons
 - standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics improve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher has restructured the leadership of the school with a new senior and subject leadership team following a period of instability. Neither team has had sufficient time to have the full impact intended on improving the quality of teaching and pupils' progress and standards.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements, although the policy required minor amendments prompted by inspectors to reflect the good practice in the school.
- The staff have support and coaching from senior leaders to ensure effective behaviour management. However, there are a small number of occasions when pupils' attitudes to learning lack enthusiasm and this leads to some low-level disruption in lessons, limiting their progress and that of others.
- The headteacher has focused on improving teaching and leads training and coaching to raise its quality. There are clear examples where the coaching has improved the quality of classroom practice but it is not yet consistently good, especially at Key Stage 1.
- Parents, staff and pupils have all commented on the positive ethos within the school that the headteacher and senior leaders have created within the school in a relatively short time. This is already having a positive impact on teaching and behaviour.
- The team of leaders below senior level grasp their new roles with enthusiasm and are keen to make a major impact on the future success of the school. With the senior leaders, they have developed a monitoring and evaluation programme to check on teaching and learning and this is applied with rigour. Consequently, teaching is improving.
- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is a particular strength. The leader is experienced and passionate about the children's learning and progress. She has developed an exceptional staff team and a stimulating and attractive learning environment that supports learning and celebrates children's work. She works extremely well with the parents and encourages them to support learning at home.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is effective. The coordinator is well organised, analyses the information on pupils' attainment and checks on progress. Termly conferences are held with class teachers to monitor progress. Many of these pupils are taught in small groups by well-trained teaching assistants or are supported effectively within the classroom. Consequently, they often make better progress than other pupils.
- With the new leadership teams successfully in place and a clear understanding of the priorities, coupled with improvements this academic year in teaching and pupils' achievement, the school has the capacity for further improvement.
- School leaders have designed a new range of learning opportunities that meets the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. Although mathematics and literacy are taught discretely, pupils also have good opportunities to practise their skills in other subject areas. Pupils say that they enjoy this approach to learning. However, in some classes the most-able pupils are not given work that challenges them sufficiently.
- The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Much of this is embedded in the school's multi-cultural ethos. Pupils show mutual respect and tolerance for others and a very clear sense of right and wrong. The school is, consequently, preparing pupils well for later life in modern British society.
- Good links exist with schools in contrasting localities at home and abroad and enhance pupils' social and cultural development. There are many additional activities and clubs available to the pupils and attendance is high. The school's choirs and orchestras regularly and successfully perform in the local

community.

- The governing body and senior leaders make sure that all pupils are treated equally and that any discrimination is tackled promptly and effectively.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. The funding provides disadvantaged pupils with support through additional staffing, opportunities for extra work in smaller groups, speech and language therapy and help for vulnerable families. Senior leaders and the link governor closely monitor the effectiveness of additional funding. Their findings show that the gaps in attainment between those pupils eligible to the funding and other pupils narrowed at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2014, showing that the funding is having a positive impact.
- The school uses its primary sports funding well. This provides coaches to teach sport and training for staff. The school is regularly involved in sports tournaments and festivals and this year entered a dance festival. The funding helps pupils to appreciate the importance of eating healthily and living a healthy life.
- The school receives good support from the local authority, particularly through staff training on teaching phonics (the links between letters and their sounds), problem-solving in mathematics, and recently on challenging the most-able pupils. The school finds the training and support valuable in improving teaching quality.
- In discussions, parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school's improvement. One parent typically said, 'The staff are very approachable and make time to talk to you. Communications are good and we know what the children are learning about.' A parent of a child in Early Years said, 'My child suffered from anxiety about starting school but the head of the unit took care of him and the staff have been brilliant. He is now confident and can't wait to get to school'.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body and the vice-chair are experienced governors and are knowledgeable about their roles and responsibilities. They have acted quickly to provide good levels of support and challenge for the new headteacher and leadership teams. They have established close working links with the school and created a monitoring plan for all governors to check its work. Governors have attended training and recently completed an externally led 'Governing Body Review' with very positive results. Governors have an increasing awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school from their increased active involvement with it. They have a good understanding of the school's performance data on pupils' attainment and progress, the quality of teaching and the actions being taken by the school leaders to address any areas of weakness. They are aware of the improvements this year in teaching and standards. As a result of the monitoring they are well aware of the positive impact of the spending of pupil premium funding and that for sports. They have a good understanding of the performance management systems in place in the school and oversee teachers' pay and the links to their performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In a small minority of lessons, the low-level disruptive behaviour of a small number of pupils detracts from the learning. In these classes, not all pupils respond quickly enough to instructions from staff. Not all pupils have positive attitudes to learning and a minority do not have sufficient pride in the presentation of their work.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide coaching for staff to show how good relationships can improve behaviour. This guidance is having a positive impact in many classes.
- The school's records over time show that the vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around school, showing respect for their peers and the adults. They have good manners and behave courteously towards others. They take care of the school environment and the resources. They take pride in wearing the school uniform.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents agree that the pupils feel safe at school. Pupils all say that if they had any concerns these would be addressed by the adults in school.
- Pupils are given helpful guidance about the safe use of the internet. Guidance for parents is given through the school's website.
- The school site is secure. Visitors to the school are checked on arrival and can only enter through a release system in the school reception office. Access to other parts of the school site is equally secure. Appointments to the school staff comply with procedures for safer recruitment and all staff are checked thoroughly prior to appointment.
- Risk assessments to check safe practice are completed whenever the pupils undertake visits and activities away from the school site. Pupils are given good advice, often from external agencies, about keeping themselves safe outside school.
- Pupils and their parents agree that instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with promptly and effectively so that they do not recur. There have been a small number of fixed term exclusions over the last three years but only when all other support has been exhausted. As a result the number of exclusions has declined.
- Attendance and punctuality have improved because of initiatives recently introduced by the school leaders and the governing body. The well-attended breakfast club has also had a positive impact. Attendance remains just below that usually found in most schools.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in the Early Years is good or better but teaching across Key Stages 1 and 2 is not consistently good in reading, writing and mathematics. Not all teachers are assessing what pupils understand and can do to inform the planning of work and so not all pupils are challenged well. This is often the case with the most-able pupils and the work planned for them does not always extend their thinking. In some classes, the most able know precisely the levels at which they are working and have specific challenges in order to progress well – but this good practice is not consistent across the school.
- Some teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils of differing ability can achieve. In some classes, expectations for the presentation of pupils' work and behaviour are not high enough. This situation applies particularly in Key Stage 1.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work often does not give reasons for positive comments or specific guidance on how the pupils can improve it. Sometimes pupils do not respond to their teachers' marking on a regular basis and as a result, their progress does not improve.
- There are several strengths in the quality of teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6, where teaching is consistently good and, sometimes, outstanding. In these classes, relationships between adults and pupils are particularly strong and create a good atmosphere for learning with the pupils eager to progress well and present their work neatly.
- In the large majority of lessons, the teachers provide helpful resources that enhance learning for the pupils and their planning of learning provides good continuity and progression for the pupils. However, this good practice is not consistent across all classes.
- The provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good, especially when they first arrive at the school with very little or no English. The teachers and teaching assistants who provide this support are well-trained and provide good-quality support. As a result, these pupils rapidly improve their skills in English.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics when the pupils left Year 6 in 2014 were between two terms and a year behind the average of other schools nationally. In 2013, the results were in line with national averages in reading and mathematics, although below in writing. From the scrutiny of the pupils' books during the inspection, and an analysis of the school's own tracking data, the pupils are currently on track for improved results in 2015.
- Although results at Key Stage 1 have shown improvements for the last three years this improvement is slow. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 is too variable because the quality of teaching has not been consistently good in those age groups.
- Pupils' progress in 2014 was not good across all subjects and lower than in 2013, when it was in line with schools nationally. The school's information on the pupils' progress this academic year shows that almost all year groups are making much improved progress. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to make expected, and in some cases, better progress in 2015.
- The majority of the most-able pupils do not reach sufficiently high levels of attainment compared to those of similar pupils nationally, especially in reading and mathematics. This is also the case at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make better progress than their peers because of the good support they receive which helps to fill particular gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- Gaps in the attainment of the disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 narrowed in 2014 and were within a term of the other pupils in the year group in mathematics, reading and writing. Compared to the national average of all pupils they were over three terms behind.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve better than other pupils in their year groups overall and, particularly so in mathematics, because they rapidly become competent users of English, including the technical language used in mathematics.
- Pupils who join the school at different times of the year are welcomed. Their knowledge and abilities are quickly assessed so that they get the support they need.
- Children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress from these low starting points and many achieve a good level of development.
- The national check on phonics for pupils at the end of Year 1 showed that the pupils in 2014 were only just below the national average from very low starting points because of the good teaching of this aspect of reading.

The early years provision

is good

- The good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the close links with parents, make sure that the children have a good start to their education. When they start school less than one in seven of the children are at the levels typical for their age in personal and social development, communication, language, and literacy and in all aspects of mathematics. The children make good progress and by the end of their time in the Reception classes half the children reach levels typical for their age when they leave the Reception classes.
- Strong leadership ensures that the adults work very effectively as a team. The quality of teaching is consistently good and often outstanding. The organisation of the resources is carefully planned to enable the children to do some work independently.

- The levels of understanding, skills and knowledge of each individual child are checked soon after they arrive at school and teachers then plan activities that match their needs and interests. Where children have specific learning needs they are provided with additional support.
- Regular analysis and discussion with the whole staff team take place about each child's attainment and progress. Coupled with good teaching, this ensures that all the children make good progress from very low starting points, particularly in the basic skills in English and mathematics. The percentage of children achieving a good level of development has improved over time, but is just below the national average.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are built into the learning opportunities that the children receive. As a result, the children are happy and settled in school and they play and work together cooperatively. They show that they care for each other and develop good behaviour and attitudes to learning. Consequently, they settle quickly to tasks and show sustained concentration.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Children and their parents are made to feel very welcome. The induction for the children and their parents involves close links with home and the in-house Nursery provision at the school. The team of staff all know the children well and focus on developing their learning as individuals through lots of interaction, particularly to develop their language and mathematical skills. They work closely with the parents and involve them in supporting the children's learning at home.

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	122456
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	456004

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	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Fields
Headteacher	Eve Moran
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2011
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