

Heather Garth Primary Academy

Billingley View, Bolton-on-Dearne, Rotherham, South Yorkshire, S63 8ES

Inspection dates 3–4 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy	
	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.

- Governors and staff at Heather Garth are successful at placing the school at the heart of its community and developing a culture of high aspiration for its pupils.
- After a dip in results in 2013, consistently good teaching has led to a swift recovery in standards so that progress is good from the children's starting points.
- The headteacher, supported well by capable and enthusiastic senior and middle leaders, checks on the progress of pupils very carefully, leading to improvements and good achievement for all.
- A consistent approach to all aspects of teaching gives pupils good guidance about how they can improve their learning.
- Governors are very involved in the life of the school and skilfully balance support and challenge to staff.
- Behaviour and safety are good because expectations are set high and pupils welcome the care and guidance they receive. A delightful lunchtime experience for pupils is typical of the orderly and pleasant atmosphere in school.
- Attendance is good and improving. This improvement is a good example of the good partnerships with parents, particularly in the early years. Parents are very supportive of the school.
- In the early years, where good resources and an exciting outdoor area are very much enjoyed by children, teaching and leadership are good. Children get off to a good start.
- The school's curriculum stimulates pupils' curiosity and assists their social, spiritual and moral development well. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some pupils do not develop reading skills quickly in Key Stage 1, often because they are not heard to read regularly enough.
- Some objectives for improvement that are written by school leaders lack precision.
- Opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures and the world around them are too infrequent.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to gain a view of the quality of teaching over time. This included observations of lessons, of part-lessons and of other activities throughout the school. One lesson was observed jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- Two discussions were held with groups of pupils, and inspectors listened to pupils reading.
- Pupils' work was looked at in lessons and other more detailed scrutiny of pupils' work was completed.
- Several meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders. One meeting was held with representatives of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to a variety of parents at the school site, and also noted the results of 43 responses on Ofsted's Parent View website.
- A total of 14 staff questionnaires was taken into account.
- A variety of documents was analysed, including the school's own self-evaluation, school improvement plan, performance management documentation, data about the achievement of pupils, minutes of meetings, and records relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Faheem Chishti

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Heather Garth Primary Academy converted to become an academy school on 1st June 2013. When its predecessor school, Heather Garth Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Heather Garth is an average-sized primary school with one class per year group except in Year 3 and Year 4 where there are three mixed-age classes.
- Five per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups which is much lower than the national average, and two per cent speak English as an additional language, which is also much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is just over a third of all pupils which is above the national average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is a little below average.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Pupils begin school in the Reception class when full-time education begins. A Nursery class called 'Happy Kids' is situated in the same environment as the Reception class, but is run under a separate Ofsted registration. It is managed by the school governors. It was inspected in September 2014 and was judged to be good.
- The school has a community base and runs a series of activities and sessions for parents on a daily basis.
- The Dearne Children's Centre is located in premises adjacent to the school, but the school has no management or leadership responsibilities for it.
- Since the last inspection, the school has appointed a deputy headteacher and two internally appointed assistant headteachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in reading in Key Stage 1, especially for the most-able pupils, by:
 - ensuring that pupils read with greater regularity
 - developing reading partnerships in and out of school, including with parents, in order to support pupils' regular reading.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management further by ensuring that school improvement objectives are precise and linked more comprehensively to the achievement of pupils.
- Increase the number of cultural elements in learning activities so that pupils gain a greater understanding of the world around them.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders are fully committed to securing improvements for the pupils at Heather Garth. They recognised the dip in standards in 2013 and have been successful in improving attainment since that time.
- The school's headteacher has a very clear vision of the school being at the centre of its community. As a result, the school is valued by parents and partners who report the school to be a warm, welcoming place where relationships are good.
- The headteacher is supported very ably by a senior staff team, including middle leaders, who collaborate well in checking on the progress of pupils, leading improvements in teaching and ensuring that school policies and procedures are followed by all.
- As a result, leaders have a good knowledge of strengths and areas for improvement. They report to governors regularly and welcome the chance to explain their work and its impact on standards. However, in some of their development objectives, the detail is not centred on improvements for pupils with enough clarity.
- Leaders have established a culture of openness where the professional development of staff is given high priority. It is normal for staff to share with each other how they can improve their teaching, and this is skilfully woven into the procedures for appraisal which are appropriately linked to pay awards.
- This transparency of approach is carried into the community where, for example, parents are invited to attend lessons and take part. Parents report this as having a direct impact on their skills, with one saying, 'when they come home with their homework book, I now know what to do to help.'
- The school has been successful in training and developing both new teachers and its own staff to take on management responsibilities. This success can be demonstrated by improvements to teaching which is consistently good throughout the school.
- The school's uses the pupil premium funding well to support those more disadvantaged children, particularly in literacy and numeracy. This is having a positive impact on their achievement, especially this academic year. All pupils have good access to the range of activities at the school, reflecting the school's commitment to ensuring that every pupil has an equal opportunity. Good relations are fostered successfully and there is no sign of any discrimination.
- The school sport grant has led to increased opportunities for children and has added to participation rates. Arrangements for lunchtime are centred around physical health and pupils enjoy the coaching they receive both at this time and during after-school activities. However, opportunities to engage in sports competition are few.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is effective. In particular, the social skills that pupils display are especially strong, being well-developed both through teamwork in lessons and well-organised and pleasant lunchtime arrangements. However, opportunities for pupils to learn about other cultures are less well provided for.
- The school curriculum offers a range of exciting themed areas which children report as being very interesting. These are used to provoke good debate and cover a wide range of subjects. Current focus on character-building, enriched by partners such as 'Commando Joe', is typical of the way the school helps children to prepare for life in modern Britain.
- Safeguarding arrangements are met fully. All staff and governors promote the safety of pupils well, and they recognise this as being one of their prime responsibilities. Parents welcome this vigilance.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Following the decision to convert to academy status, the governing body initiated its own internal review and analysed its range of skills to try to support and challenge school staff more effectively. To this end, it has been successful, and governors are very visible in school, assisting school leaders with checks on teaching and learning. This means that they have a good knowledge of the quality of teaching at the school and how it is performing overall.
 - Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and hold the school's leaders to account regularly. They are well organised with clear roles and responsibilities. They check on the performance and pay arrangements of staff effectively and ensure that any underperformance is addressed. Governors also take their responsibilities over safeguarding very seriously. For example, a member of the governing body accompanies pupils on residential trips to assist with all health and safety matters.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school provides a warm, safe and pleasant environment for pupils to learn in. They respect this by being polite and respectful around school. Their work is generally well presented and shows pride in their achievements, for example through the well-maintained 'writing portfolios' that each child has. They collaborate well and respect each other's opinions and ideas.
- Bullying is very rare and pupils have confidence in staff to support them in the event of any occurring. They are adamant that all pupils are treated equally and fairly.
- Pupils are given a range of responsibilities in the school, ranging from digital leaders to librarians and even botanists. They respond with maturity which helps to make the lunchtime periods, in particular, happy, productive and safe.
- Pupils are eager to learn and work hard. They report some low-level disruption to lessons, but are satisfied with the way staff deal with these relatively infrequent incidents. They also speak enthusiastically and appreciatively of the support they get from staff to help them with their learning, and this was also clear in pupils' books and work around the school.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils report a school environment where everyone helps each other. Through the very effective work of a family support worker and a learning mentor, staff know pupils well and help them to feel part of a very safe environment.
- Pupils know about the various forms of bullying and are adamant that bullying incidents are rare at the school. They are appreciative of the lessons and activities that they receive to help them stay safe in other environments, for example on the Internet and social media sites.
- The well-attended breakfast club provides pupils with a safe and secure start to the day. Furthermore, well-staffed classrooms are open early to provide children with a calm and purposeful start in school and this is valued by parents.
- Leaders have recognised that in the past attendance was not good enough. It has improved, including for disadvantaged pupils, so that attendance is now in line with the national average for all pupils.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of literacy and mathematics is improving. This is because there is a consistent application of high expectations which is leading to rising achievement. All teachers are highly reflective and are constantly seeking to improve their practice.
- Teachers are confident, well trained and forge very good relationships with pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire agree that their child is taught well at the school.
- Good communication skills are promoted well in classes and these help to cement positive attitudes to learning within the classrooms. For example, Year 5 pupils maturely discussed the moral dilemma posed by entering a newly-discovered Egyptian tomb. Their reasoning was developed well by staff in an atmosphere of purpose and curiosity.
- Mathematics is taught very precisely and with a good level of challenge. The teaching motivates the children and also provides opportunities for good reasoning skills. A Year 6 class was working out the area of a trapezium with thought and perseverance, discussing methodology with each other most respectfully. Activities of this type are helping to prepare the pupils well for the next stage of their education.
- The teaching of phonics (the letters and sounds that they make) is good and leads to achievement which is in line with national expectations. Teachers skilfully show pupils how this phonetic awareness can assist them with their early writing.
- The teaching of reading is supported well through a wide range of good quality books and excellent enrichment opportunities, such as an 'author in residence' who dedicated his last book to the school. The good questioning used in reading sessions has helped many pupils attain standards which are above average for their age. Although this good questioning is also present in the teaching of reading for the younger pupils at the school, these pupils do not have enough opportunities to be listened to read individually at school.

- The work in pupils' books shows pride and care. It is marked carefully by teachers who manage a consistent approach to feedback and guidance. This means that pupils are well aware of comments and symbols that are used to help them improve their work. The way in which pupils, in writing activities, move from 'cold' drafted work to completed 'hot' pieces of composition is a good example of how this support leads to consistently good progress.
- The very good teamwork between teachers and support staff usually means that children who require extra support make good progress. The school has a very clear view on including all pupils in all activities and teaching assistants skilfully ensure that no child is left behind.
- Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to develop social skills. They discuss their work maturely and collaborate well because teachers promote teamwork very effectively. However, there are too few opportunities to reflect on different cultures and the world around them.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children progress well from their starting points in Reception and they end Key Stage 1 with attainment which is marginally below the national averages. They continue to progress well throughout Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6, so that they leave with levels of attainment which are similar to those found nationally.
- In 2013, the school's attainment for those pupils leaving Year 6 dipped from previous years. The school has carefully checked on the progress of groups since then and, coupled with improved teaching, results in 2014 were better, especially in mathematics and reading. This performance represented good progress from the pupils' starting points.
- Checks on the assessments currently made by teachers, and observations of the work in pupils' books, confirm an improving picture in all subjects. The current group of pupils in Year 6 are working at or above expectations for their age, especially in mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check carried out at the end of Year 1 is now in line with national averages, having made a rapid improvement from 2013. The majority of pupils achieve expected standards in reading when they leave Year 2, representing good progress from their starting points at the end of the Reception Year.
- In 2013 at the end of Key Stage 2, there was a large gap between the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium and other pupils of their age in the school in all subjects. This gap was narrowed in 2014 but still remained significant at approximately three terms behind other pupils in their class and one term behind all pupils nationally. However, current assessment information in the school and careful observations of the progress of this group of pupils confirm that this gap is narrowing at a faster rate this year in all subjects. This is because of an improvement in the way teachers and teaching assistants support pupils.
- The most-able pupils are challenged well, helping them to achieve standards which are above the national average. This is especially true in reading, where proportions achieving the higher Level 5 are greater than average and in mathematics, where the proportion of pupils attaining the top Level 6 grade is high. However, in Key Stage 1, on occasions, the most-able pupils are not given the same high level of challenge, especially in reading, and here the proportions of pupils attaining the higher Levels 2a and 3 are smaller than those found nationally.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. They are supported especially well by teaching assistants and skilled pastoral staff who provide a level of nurture and care which assists these pupils to grow in confidence and skills.
- Pupils achieve increasingly well across the curriculum because teachers insist on standards in these subjects similar to those in English and mathematics. For example, scientific experiments are challenging and thoughtful, and evaluations are written up neatly, with good grammar and punctuation. Exciting activities, for example the Spanish themed days or the 'Commando Joe' project that was under way during the time of the inspection, assist the pupils to develop good communication and social skills.

The early years provision is good

- The Reception class shares its space with the 'Happy Kids' Nursery class and a feature of the good provision is the shared planning and teamwork between the two. This helps children develop well across the two years that many of them spend here.
- Many of the Reception children transfer from the 'Happy Kids' Nursery class, but a significant proportion

enters from other nursery settings or without any nursery experience. Their levels of language, communication and personal development are generally still below those typical for their age.

- Teaching in Reception is good because staff have good subject knowledge and set a happy, calm atmosphere which allows children to flourish. For example, a group of six children was observed writing a postcard to the penguins in Antarctica; they were given very careful guidance about sounds and letters that were related to their work on verbal phonics (the sounds that letters represent), including many visual prompts.
- A feature of the setting is the beautiful outdoor area. Filled with a mixture of artificial and natural features including caves and bridges, it stimulates the children's imagination well. A group of children was making nests for real eggs, and imagining the different animals that could hatch from them. Such activities are giving good assistance to early language skills, as well as celebrating curiosity.
- Leadership is good because staff are well deployed and well organised and activities offered to children are planned well to meet the needs of all the children. Leaders have high expectations and have been successful in ensuring that the proportion of children achieving a good level of development reflects the national average. This represents at least good progress for this group of children, bearing in mind their often below typical starting points.
- Staff assess pupils' development very regularly and maintain careful records. This helps them to plan activities which develop the next stage of their learning. On occasions however, these activities offer insufficient challenge for the most-able children.
- Children play well together and mix naturally with the 'Happy Kids' class. They show developing independence, for example cleaning up after painting, and they learn routines quickly. Their behaviour is good.
- Staff work successfully together to provide good quality care. The physical environment is very safe and pupils demonstrate behaviour that shows that they know how to keep safe, for example by choosing the correct footwear to put on to go outside. Staff show how committed they are to the children in their care by sitting with them at tables at lunchtime and modelling table manners and promoting conversation.
- A strength of early education at Heather Garth is the very strong partnership with parents. Many are involved with the school before their child starts in Reception and, through links with the school's family engagement worker, contribute well to their child's early development in school. The school has also worked very successfully with children who have a disability or special educational need, with one parent saying that her child had gained an extra confidence from the early, targeted and sensitive support provided.

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	139748
Local authority	Barnsley
Inspection number	453408

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	222
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandra Farr
Headteacher	Ann Wise
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected as an academy
Telephone number	01709 894149
Fax number	01709 881514
Email address	a.wise@heathergarth.org

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

