

Highwoods Community Primary School

Tynedale Square, Highwoods, Colchester, CO4 9SN

Inspection dates 24–25 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	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.

- This is a good and rapidly improving school where pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their academic progress are promoted very successfully.
- Supported well by other leaders and the governing body, the headteacher and senior leaders are ambitious for the continued success of the school. They have improved the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The governing body tracks the work of the school closely and holds leaders to account well for the performance of the school.
- From below-average starting points, pupils of all abilities, including those who are at the early stages of learning English, make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is typically good. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Pupils with behavioural, social and emotional needs are supported exceptionally well in their learning and development because the adults work very closely with them. This enables them to settle quickly and to make rapid progress.
- Children in the Reception classes benefit from an exciting and well-planned learning environment and make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They concentrate well on their work.
- Pupils are kept very safe and say they feel very safe at school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, the most-able pupils are not stretched sufficiently. Consequently, they do not always achieve as well as they can.
- Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as fast as in Reception and Key Stage 2, especially in writing. This is because tasks are not always sufficiently demanding for all groups of pupils and their handwriting and presentation skills are not well developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the headteacher. They made a number of short visits to lessons and observed small groups of pupils taught by teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors also listened to pupils in Years 3 and 6 reading to them.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of staff, the Chair and the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, five other governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 76 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. They talked to parents in the morning when they accompanied their children to school. Inspectors also considered the 45 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' books and at a number of documents, including: the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; school improvement planning; documentation relating to teachers' performance over time; and records relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Tusha Chakraborti, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Greevy

Additional Inspector

Ken Parry

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 April 2013. When its predecessor school of the same name was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be a good school.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full time.
- There has been a sharp increase in the number of pupils in school. This resulted in the number in Year 6 being increased from 30 in 2013 to 90 in the current year. Also, an increasing number of pupils, who are at the early stages of learning English, joined the school in Years 5 and 6 over the past two years.
- Most pupils come from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils in the care of the local authority and for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is a member of the North Colchester Primary Collaborative and North Essex School Partnership and the 'Child First' Local Delivery Group.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that all teachers give the most-able pupils more challenging tasks so that they achieve the highest levels of which they are capable and move their learning on quickly in lessons
- Improve pupils' achievement in Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, by:
 - setting tasks in lessons that always are sufficiently demanding for all groups of pupils
 - improving pupils' handwriting and presentation skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Inspired by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other leaders and managers work as a highly effective team and have ensured good teaching and pupils' achievement. They have taken decisive action to improve attendance across the school and to ensure pupils are kept safe. Staff work with a common aim to promote pupils' behaviour with equal success alongside their academic progress. As a result, exclusion rates have been reduced significantly since the academy opened.
- The school's leaders and governors have established clear responsibilities at all levels of leadership. Subject leaders, inclusion coordinator and the early years leader work well together to improve all aspects of the school's work. Senior and subject leaders use the information tracking pupils' progress effectively to plan well-targeted support for any individuals who are at the risk of falling behind in their learning. Subject leaders are effective in supporting teachers in planning and teaching.
- Leaders monitor the quality of teaching very effectively. Arrangements for checking staff performance are rigorous. Staff are set challenging performance targets and are held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes.
- The curriculum is creative and well planned. It provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their understanding of their community. This means they are well prepared for life in modern Britain. There is a strong focus on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, as well as the very effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to respect the values of others and that any form of discrimination is wrong. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through a range of subjects, including religious studies, art, music and sporting activities.
- The primary sports funding is used well to employ specialist coaches who provide additional sporting provision in and after school, as well as training for staff to enhance their expertise. The funds have also been used to extend the opportunities for competitive sports for all pupils. As a result, pupils' participation is now high and pupils enjoy a range of inter-school competitions. The school has won indoor athletics and girls' football in the local leagues.
- The school ensures that safeguarding of pupils is given a high priority and fully meets statutory requirements. All staff work diligently to sustain equal opportunity for all pupils and to ensure that there is no discrimination, whatever pupils' background or ability. All pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, benefit from high-quality adult care and excellent relationships.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively to support the pupils for whom it is intended. As a result, gaps in performance are closing. Vulnerable pupils and those who are at the early stages of learning English are supported very effectively, enabling these pupils to make good progress.
- The local authority has provided effective support that reflects the school's good performance. Highly effective partnerships with local schools enrich pupils' experiences and enable staff to share and develop good practice.
- The school has a close partnership with parents. All parents spoken to during the inspection were very positive and pleased with all the school is doing for their children. Parents of children in challenging circumstances, who spoke to inspectors, praised the school highly.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and understands the priorities for the school to continue to improve; governance is effective. Governors challenge and support leaders very well. They operate as a team and organise their work efficiently. In recent years, they have enriched their skills by taking part in training and this helps them to meet their statutory duties fully. As a result, procedures for safeguarding pupils are of high quality. Governors review the performance of the school and are actively involved in

the evaluation of the school's work and in development planning. They know about the quality of teaching and how it is improved, and they understand the link between pupils' progress and teachers' pay. Governors understand performance data and judge the school's performance compared to schools nationally. They monitor the school's finances carefully and ensure that the funds for sports and pupil premium are used effectively to improve pupils' achievement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are very proud of their school. In explaining how good their school is, they say, 'Nothing is perfect but it's very close.' They value the diversity of culture and religion and the friendly environment within their school, and they are being taught well to understand British values and democracy.
- The school's procedures for managing pupils' behaviour are comprehensive and they are applied consistently. This has a very positive impact on pupils' behaviour, including those with high behaviour, social and emotional difficulties. As a result, pupils display good levels of self-discipline in and out of the classroom. They are confident that behaviour in school is good and that teachers deal with any rare, minor disruption in lessons quickly and effectively to restore a positive learning environment in classrooms.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as being members of the school council and raising funds for national and international charities. They worked well together to raise issues regarding fair trade, such as the export of coffee beans from Brazil at a low cost. They organised a coffee morning to raise funds for Water Aid and Dogs Trust.
- Although the rate of exclusions has previously been high, it has fallen significantly, reflecting the improvement in pupils' behaviour and the effectiveness of the school's support for pupils who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. Attendance is above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school. Pupils say they feel extremely safe and they receive high-quality care and support from all the adults in the school.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of the different types of bullying. They say bullying is very rare and that, should it occur, it is quickly dealt with, ensuring that pupils feel totally safe and secure. Pupils are very aware of the dangers of the misuse of the internet and social networking sites.
- Pupils have a very clear understanding of the risks they face in their everyday lives; for example, they are well aware of cyber-bullying and issues relating to the misuse of drugs. They know what to do if they should encounter any such situation. They have a mature understanding of a range of bullying issues that pupils of their age may encounter, and what to do about them.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching promotes pupils' good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. The relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are excellent, resulting in a very positive climate for learning in all classrooms.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and use questions very effectively to check pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking skills. They build well on pupils' prior learning. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher's probing questioning ensured that pupils used their prior learning effectively to find the surface area of a cuboid, extending their understanding of how to draw two-dimensional representations of three-dimensional shapes.
- Teachers have high expectations of their pupils and convey these effectively to pupils, trusting them to

take responsibility for deciding what to do next. In a Year 5 science lesson, the teacher trusted the pupils to take decisions, such as how to conduct a fair test and how to record the findings of their investigation.

- The learning support assistants provide skilled additional support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. This contributes well to these pupils' rapidly increasing progress.
- In most lessons, teachers set challenging tasks that match the capabilities of different groups of pupils, including the most able, and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, in a small minority of cases, they do not make effective use of the information they have about what pupils already know and can do to ensure that work is hard enough for the most able. Consequently, these pupils do not always achieve the high standards of which they are capable.
- Marking of pupils' work is very thorough and effective, particularly in English and mathematics and science. This, along with regular verbal feedback, provides clear and effective guidance for the next steps pupils need to take to move their learning on. Pupils respond well to teachers' marking and the support they receive from their teachers.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in national and school assessments at the end of Year 6 show that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Although pupils' attainment was higher in 2013 than in 2014, the rate of progress was faster in 2014 in relation to these pupils' starting points. The school's own assessment for the current year shows similarly good progress.
- An increasing number of the most-able pupils make good progress in all subjects. They read a range of stories and information texts which enhance their understanding of different styles of texts. They understand how to write effectively for different purposes and analyse different styles of writing by a range of well-known and popular authors. In mathematics, they use calculation skills fluently to solve problems. Occasionally, however, these pupils' progress slows when they are set work that is too easy for them.
- Progress is not as good in Key Stage 1 as it is in Key Stage 2 and the early years. This is particularly the case in writing. This is because not all groups of pupils are stretched sufficiently and pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are not well developed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are given effective support through that is matched to their individual learning needs. The same is true for those pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils are currently making accelerated progress and achieving well.
- In Year 6 in 2014, the gaps between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the school were around four terms in reading, writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils were approximately four terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and writing, and three terms behind in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils are now attaining standards that are in line with those of their classmates. This is due to very effective support for them, in small groups and on a one-to-one basis, that has resulted in these pupils making accelerated progress throughout the school.

The early years provision is good

- Leadership of the early years is good and ensures that stimulating learning resources are used effectively to sustain children's good progress. Adults provide children with an enjoyable, safe and secure learning environment. As a result, children feel very safe and secure, and they quickly grow in confidence.
- Children start in the Reception Year with skills that are below those typical for their age. They make good progress. Regular teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make) supports children well in rapidly

developing their reading and writing skills. Children show a great deal of interest in writing and are able to write short sentences; for example, instructions for making chocolate Easter nests. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is in line with the national average. They are well prepared for their entry into Key Stage 1.

- Teaching is good. Staff provide a range of engaging activities that encourage children to become confident in pursuing indoor and outdoor activities that match their own interests as well as those directed by adults. The 'Forest Schools' programme enables children to explore nature. Children were delighted to find frogspawn in the nature reserve area. They explained clearly that frogspawn 'grows into tadpoles and then into frogs' and also, that there are 'millions of eggs' in frogspawn.
- Behaviour is good. Children have an excellent and caring relationship with their teachers and learning support assistants. They are confident in speaking to the adults, sharing concerns and celebrating their achievements. They listen carefully, support one another and are starting to take on simple responsibilities, such as tidying up.
- The school works in close contact with families from before their children start and throughout their time at Highwoods. All parents consulted during the inspection at the start of the day stated that their contributions are valued and that they are very happy with the school's work with their children.

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	139462
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	449969

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	450
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Hoy
Headteacher	Nigel Hookway
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01206 845887
Email address	admin@highwoods.essex.sch.uk

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 2015

