

Hill Farm Primary School

Foster Road, Radford, Coventry, CV6 3BL

Inspection dates 22–23 April 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.

- The headteacher is an inspiring leader. She has led key improvements in teaching. These have improved pupils' achievement because staff share the ambition for all pupils to do well.
- Governors and trust board members have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold it to account for pupils' achievement.
- Leaders have dealt quickly and effectively with any ineffective teaching so teaching is now typically good. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Teachers ask interesting and challenging questions which develop pupils' understanding so they succeed in their learning.
- Exemplary marking provides detailed guidance to help pupils improve their work.
- Children in the early years are taught and cared for well. They make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils behave well. They are polite and well mannered.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They feel safe and are keen to learn.
- From starting points below what is typical, pupils reach standards in line with those found nationally in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind and those learning English as an additional language are given good individual support so they achieve well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some of the most-able pupils do not reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Standards in writing are not consistently good because in some classes pupils do not write enough in subjects other than literacy.
- Pupils are not always given enough opportunities to develop skills in art, music, drama and dance.
- Teachers in new leadership roles are not yet checking teaching and pupils' progress enough.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 24 lessons, four of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. Pupils’ behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes was also observed.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, other staff, pupils, members of the governing body, members of the academy trust board and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors sought the views of parents through informal discussions at the start of the school day. They took account of the 45 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and responses to the school’s surveys of parents’ views.
- Inspectors took account of the 41 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors checked pupils’ written work in a range of subjects and listened to pupils reading.
- A wide range of documents was considered. These included: the school’s analysis of how well it is doing; its plan for improvement; information on pupils’ progress and attainment; school policies; records of governing body and academy trust board meetings; and records relating to safeguarding, attendance and behaviour.

Inspection team

Helen Morrison, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Theresa Walters	Additional Inspector
John Bates	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hill Farm Primary School became an academy, sponsored by the Castle Phoenix Trust, in September 2013.
- It is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Just over half of the pupils are White British; a tenth are from other White backgrounds and the remaining pupils are from various minority ethnic backgrounds. About a third of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority) is higher than average.
- The current headteacher joined the school in an interim capacity in September 2012 and was appointed as permanent headteacher in September 2013.
- Ten teachers have been appointed since September 2014, including the interim deputy headteacher who joined the school at the beginning of the summer term. Two of the four newly qualified teachers who were appointed in September 2014 have subsequently left. Four teachers are on family leave.
- Children in the early years start in the Nursery class where they attend part time. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body and formed part of the inspection.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the good teaching so that pupils make even more rapid progress by making sure that:
 - the most-able pupils are always given work that is difficult enough in every lesson so they reach the high standards of which they are capable
 - pupils are given opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects, as well as in literacy lessons
 - pupils have more opportunities to use and develop their skills in art, music, dance and drama.
- Improve leadership and management by making sure that all leaders have sufficient opportunities to check teaching and its impact on learning so they provide high quality support for the headteacher in further raising standards.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's relentless drive for improvement, shared fully by all school leaders, governors and trust board members, has successfully improved teaching and raised standards. They have successfully set a culture of good teaching and behaviour.
- Leaders' self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Senior leaders analyse comprehensive, detailed information on pupils' attainment and progress. They monitor the school's effectiveness, identify priorities for improvement and plan these carefully. All staff share a determination to move the school forward and this, together with strong teamwork, demonstrates its good capacity for further improvement.
- Leaders monitor teachers' work carefully against the progress pupils make. These checks make sure that any pupils in danger of falling behind are promptly identified and helped to quickly catch up. Leaders hold staff accountable and link teachers' career progression and salary increases to the quality of their teaching and the progress made by pupils in their classes.
- The Castle Phoenix academy trust board provides effective challenge and support for the school and holds leaders to account regularly for the progress pupils make. It sets performance targets for the headteacher and uses data effectively to make sure leaders are raising standards.
- Leaders make sure that staff benefit from training which is carefully linked to the school's priorities and individual targets. Newly qualified teachers are supported well and are given good opportunities develop their skills.
- Pupils from different backgrounds learn and play happily together because pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learn about the beliefs of different faiths and have a good understanding of right and wrong. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are taught British values of tolerance, respect, equality and why rules are important. As a result, pupils listen to one another, show respect for the ideas and opinions of others, take turns, share equipment and look after one another.
- The primary physical education and sport premium is used to provide specialist sports teaching and swimming lessons taught by staff from the secondary academy in the academy trust. It also funds after-school sports clubs which are very well-attended. As a result, pupils enjoy a wider range of sports and the numbers participating in physical activities has increased.
- The pupil premium is used effectively to support the academic progress of disadvantaged pupils and to provide personal and emotional support. One-to-one and small-group support helps pupils catch up in their work. Leaders have made good arrangements for pupils' pastoral support through the work of a learning mentor and by providing counselling support. As a result, the attendance rates of these pupils have improved; they tackle work with more confidence and make faster progress.
- The school demonstrates its commitment to equal opportunities by ensuring that all pupils are included in its activities. It has suitable policies and procedures for tackling discrimination should the need arise.
- Safeguarding arrangements, including those for child protection, meet current requirements and are effective. All training is up to date. Systems and procedures are robust and carefully monitored. As a result, pupils are safe and secure in school.
- Good teaching and carefully planned themes capture pupils' interests. Pupils develop skills in reading and mathematics well, but in some classes they are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing in other subjects. Pupils benefit from specialist music lessons at the secondary academy in the academy trust, but do not always develop their music, art, drama and dance skills in other lessons.

- While the headteacher and senior leaders have dealt promptly with issues that had a negative impact on pupils' achievement, the monitoring roles of those in new leadership posts, such as subject leaders, are not yet fully developed.

■ The governance of the school:

- Members of the local governing body are effective. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. They have received training so that they understand the data on pupils' performance and what this tells them about how well the school is doing. As a result, they support, monitor and challenge school leaders effectively.
- They regularly visit the school to see the quality of teaching for themselves.
- Governors ensure that challenging performance targets are set for staff and check that teachers' salary progression is linked to pupils' progress. They know how any underperformance in teaching is dealt with.
- They monitor finances carefully so they know how the additional the pupil premium funding is spent and its impact on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors carry out their statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils fully meet national requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Clear expectations and effective use of rewards ensure that pupils always know what is acceptable. Those spoken to during the inspection felt that most pupils behave well. The school's records also confirm that the good behaviour seen during the inspection is typical.
- Pupils from different groups and backgrounds work and play together happily. They are polite, courteous and show good manners towards each other and adults.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic, and respond quickly to teachers' instructions. In lessons pupils work hard, are keen to learn and help one another. Although occasionally a few pupils lose concentration, low-level disruption is rare and so learning is not affected.
- Pupils are proud to belong to the school. They plan and organise charity fund-raising activities and enjoy taking responsibility, for example, helping as monitors or acting as play leaders at lunchtime.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Staff training for child protection is up to date so that adults have a good knowledge of child protection procedures, know what to look out for and are ready to intervene if necessary. Policies are followed by all staff so that safeguarding procedures, including the vetting of staff prior to appointment, are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. Access to the school is secure and all visitors are appropriately checked.
- Although a small number of parents expressed some concerns about bullying, almost all pupils said that any instances of bullying are dealt with well by staff. Pupils have a clear understanding of how bullying can affect people's lives and the different forms it can take, such as name-calling, making people feel alone or cyber-bullying. Pupils say they feel safe in school because staff listen to them. They are confident that staff would deal quickly with any problems should they arise.
- Pupils are taught to take care of themselves and others, including when using the internet. They also learn about how to keep safe out of school, particularly with regard to road safety.
- Due to strong efforts made by the school, for example its system of rewards, attendance has risen significantly. However, attendance remains just below the national average.
- Almost all pupils arrive on time for a prompt start to the school day. Those who attend the breakfast club

are very well looked after and pupils enjoy the activities it provides.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher and school leaders have taken rigorous action in the past year to improve the quality of teaching. As a result, teaching is good. Work in pupils' books, records of checks carried out by leaders and evidence gathered during the inspection, show that pupils learn well and make good progress.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and plan interesting activities which engage and enthuse them. Teachers provide clear explanations and ask questions skilfully so that pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils considered thoughtfully whether the different characters in a story were 'good' or 'bad' and responded very well to the challenge to prove their point of view.
- Pupils choose their home learning activities from a range of tasks which are carefully linked to the 'theme' work pupils complete in school. This approach engages pupils and extends their learning.
- Most parents think their children are taught well and pupils agree that teachers make learning interesting and fun. Inspection evidence supports these views.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly. Teachers rigorously assess pupils' progress and identify what they need to do to improve their work, and this information is used carefully to plan activities that build on pupils' previous learning. At the beginning of each morning pupils are given time to act on the advice they are given, answer the additional questions teachers pose and talk to their teachers about their work. As a result, pupils correct their work, learn from any mistakes and achieve well.
- Teaching assistants work in close partnership with class teachers to match work to the individual learning needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and disadvantaged pupils. Teaching assistants provide a good mix of encouragement, challenge and additional help so these pupils make similar progress to their class mates.
- Children in Nursery and Reception start to learn phonics (the sounds linked to letters) and how to use them in their reading. All pupils read regularly in school and, as a result, become fluent and confident readers.
- Mathematics is taught effectively. Pupils use their good mathematical knowledge to solve increasingly complex problems and are given opportunities to discuss their work so they learn from one another.
- Writing is taught well in literacy lessons and pupils have regular opportunities to practise their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills when they write. However, in some classes pupils are not given enough opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects.
- Pupils benefit from high quality specialist teaching, for example in music and sport, provided by the secondary academy in the academy trust. This has successfully raised standards in these subjects. However pupils' creative skills, for example in art, dance and drama are not developed well enough in other lessons.
- Although adults regularly check on pupils' progress in lessons and give extra help when pupils find tasks difficult, work is not always difficult enough for the most-able pupils. As a result, too few of these pupils reach the highest levels of attainment.

The achievement of pupils is good

- In 2014 standards were in line with the national average in reading, but below in writing and mathematics. Achievement has improved over the last year as a result of actions taken in response to these results.

- In Key Stage 2, achievement is now good. Pupils' books, the school's current progress data and lesson observations show rapid improvement in all year groups. Attainment in reading and mathematics is in line with that expected for pupils' ages, although it is lower in writing in some year groups. Current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach average levels of attainment at the end of this year. Pupils are in line to make better progress than nationally expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Achievement in Key Stage 1 is good. Although attainment at the end of Year 2 in 2014 was below average pupils made good progress from their different starting points. Pupils in the current Year 2 have benefited from the school's actions to tackle weaknesses in teaching and are on track to attain the national average at the end of the year.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics. The proportion of pupils reaching the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved last year in line with the national average. Pupils who did not reach the nationally expected standard are catching up and their reading is improving quickly.
- Standards in reading have risen. A regular programme for the teaching of phonics ensures pupils quickly gain essential skills; pupils in Years 1 and 2 made good use of these skills when reading to inspectors. By Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic and fluent readers who talk confidently about authors whose work they enjoy.
- Work in pupils' books shows that progress in mathematics is also good because lessons are carefully planned to deepen pupils' understanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, well-structured teaching and skilful questioning helped pupils to apply their knowledge of fractions so they could confidently identify the ratios of different coloured sweets in a pack.
- Although attainment in writing has risen this year, standards do not yet match those achieved in reading because pupils are not given enough opportunities to use the writing skills learnt in literacy in other lessons.
- Disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium in Year 6 in 2014 were just under half a term behind others in school in reading, two terms behind in writing and half a year behind in mathematics. When compared with pupils nationally, they were a term behind in reading and a year behind in writing and mathematics. Work in pupils' books and current information about achievement show disadvantaged pupils now make progress at least in line with, and sometimes at faster rates than, their peers in school. As a result, attainment gaps are closing.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their learning needs are assessed accurately and their progress is carefully checked. Work in lessons and individual support are carefully planned so pupils achieve well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are given skilled support, such as additional speech and language teaching. This ensures that these pupils make similar good progress to their classmates.
- Some of the most-able pupils reach the higher levels because they are given challenging work. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher's very high expectations and skilful questioning ensured the most-able pupils enjoyed the complex mathematics problems they were given and made rapid progress. However, in some lessons, learning is held back because pupils are occasionally given work that is too easy and does not extend their thinking or deepen their skills.

The early years provision

is good

- Good leadership and management ensure that teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is consistently good. Children's progress is assessed carefully and they are given a variety of activities that capture their interests and help them develop a range of skills. Consequently all children, from their differing starting points, do well in all areas of learning and particularly in developing early literacy and number skills.

- Children start in the Nursery with weak skills and understanding particularly in speaking, reading and writing.
- Teaching in the early years has improved and is now good. As a result, children make good progress and attainment at the end of the Reception year has improved rapidly over the last two years. There has been a sharp increase in the number of children achieving the expected level, which prepares them well for Year 1.
- The Nursery and Reception classrooms provide children with a vibrant learning environment. Resources are easily accessible and well-chosen to stimulate the children’s interest. Activities, both indoors and outside, contribute well to children’s spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, such as encouraging imagination in the role play area.
- Children enjoy the mix of adult-led activities and those that they can choose for themselves. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of reading and children use their knowledge of phonics well, for example, when working out how to spell ‘daffodil’.
- Adults use a range of questions so that children practise speaking and listening, explaining what they are doing and what they have found out. For example, children were enthralled as they watched the chickens hatch and enthusiastically counted the number of chickens and the number of remaining eggs. All children learn and practise new words, and good support is provided for children at the earliest stages of learning English.
- Children behave well. They are taught to listen to one another and to take turns. Children are safe, feel confident and are keen to learn. Parents are welcomed, and are strongly encouraged and supported to help their children’s learning; this has a positive impact on children’s progress.

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	139681
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	450139

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	592
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ruth Winters
Headteacher	Claire Jones
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	02476 595455
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