

Hillocks Primary and Nursery School

Unwin Road, Sutton-in-Ashfield, NG17 4ND

Inspection dates 9–10 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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

- Leaders do not routinely check closely enough on teaching and the progress made by some groups of pupils. Consequently, improvements have been inconsistent.
- Teachers' targets for improvement are not linked sufficiently closely to pupils' progress.
- Governors are not practised in carrying out activities to check leaders are doing all they can to ensure pupils achieve well.
- Teaching is not consistently good, especially in writing and mathematics, and this slows pupils' progress in these subjects.
- The most-able pupils are not consistently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Pupils' progress is too variable. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 in writing and mathematics are lower than for reading.
- Writing skills are held back because pupils are not systematically taught to spell the most commonly used words, and are not challenged to correct them.
- Many pupils are unsure of the meaning of the vocabulary commonly used in mathematics, slowing progress.
- Not all teachers adhere to the school's marking policy. Pupils are not always informed about what they have done well or what they need to do to improve.
- The school's website is not kept up-to-date.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders work to keep pupils safe and secure, and in creating a culture where good behaviour can flourish, is good.
- Pupils' enjoy school and behave well. They say they feel safe and well looked after in school.
- Parents express support for the school. They are confident that their children are well cared for.
- Provision in the early years is led well so children get off to a good start. Staff know children well, and work together to provide them with good quality teaching that ensures children achieve well.
- Leaders' action to improve reading standards has worked well. The teaching of reading is good. Pupils make good progress in reading and achieve well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by adults who know them well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The active promotion of British values ensures pupils behave in a tolerant and respectful way towards each other and adults.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and visited 22 lessons, five of which were jointly observed with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with governors, school leaders and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and their experiences at school. They also listened to some of them read and looked at their work in books.
- A range of school documents were scrutinised including information on pupils' current progress, the school improvement plan and self-evaluation information. A number of policies and procedures were checked including those linked to the marking of pupils' work, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour logs.
- Inspectors took account of the 23 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the views of parents who spoke to an inspector as they dropped their children at school.
- The views expressed in the 25 returned staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The breakfast club was observed to see how it helps pupils at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Judith Askey-Brown

Additional Inspector

Sakhawat Ali

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hillocks Primary and Nursery School is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Provision in the early years takes the form of a Nursery, in which pupils attend part time, and two full-time Reception classes.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average. They are supported through the pupil premium, which is funding to help pupils eligible for free school meals, and those in local authority care.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- The school operates a breakfast club during term time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Secure consistently good teaching to raise pupil achievement in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - activities planned for the most-able are sufficiently challenging to move their learning on at a good rate
 - the marking of pupils' work adheres to the school policy by making it clear to them what they have done well, and by showing them how to improve through further challenges or by making corrections
 - pupils are systematically taught how to consistently spell correctly
 - pupils are taught, and helped to understand, the language associated with mathematics
- Increase the impact of leaders, including governors, on improving teaching and raising pupil achievement by making sure that:
 - more emphasis is placed on checking the progress made by pupil groups in all year groups
 - teachers' targets for improvement are closely related to pupils' progress
 - the school's website is kept up to date with statutory requirements.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders, including subject leaders, have not ensured that all groups of pupils achieve well. There has not been a sufficiently tight focus on identifying weaknesses in teaching and in pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in writing and mathematics.
- Leaders do not check often enough that actions taken have produced the desired improvement. This has resulted in some inconsistencies persisting in the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 6. For example, the school's marking policy is not consistently applied in all classes.
- The local authority's support through visits each term, and linking the school with another successful school, have not been sufficient to help the school to accurately evaluate its performance. The process does not take enough account of pupils' progress in all classes and consequently in some areas, notably teaching and pupil achievement, the school has an over-generous view of its performance.
- The school improvement plan has clear end-of-year targets and termly milestones for checking progress towards them are identified. However, these targets and milestones are not linked closely enough to pupil groups or to teachers' targets for improvement so it is difficult for leaders to check that all pupils are being supported to achieve well.
- The school's website is not checked often enough to ensure it is up to date and fully meets requirements. Omissions mean that parents do not have easy access to information to help them understand what their children are learning at school.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that is enriched through visits, visitors with specialist skills and experiences, and access to the 'Forest School' woodland classroom activities on the school site. Good use has been made of the sports funding to improve the quality of teaching of sport, and to expand the range of sports offered during lessons and after school. More pupils are involved in competitive sport. Swimming lessons for all Year 4 pupils has ensured that these pupils develop competence and confidence in the water.
- Recently implemented checks on the impact the additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils shows that it is being used increasingly effectively to raise the achievement of these pupils. For some pupils the support they have received has led to some strong improvements in reading and mathematics. For other pupils, the focus has been on supporting their personal development and welfare. This has improved pupils' attendance and confidence to learn.
- Support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is well organised and pupils' progress is monitored effectively. Precise targeting of individual and small group support enables these pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The school's commitment to equality for all is reflected in the typically good support provided for this group of pupils and for disadvantaged pupils.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. The school actively promotes understanding and tolerance of other cultures and religious faiths through links within the local community. Pupils appreciate that the rule of law, as expressed through the school's high expectations for their behaviour and the positive relationships they forge with each other, promote their personal liberty and well-being. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. The school's working practices with outside agencies are good.
- Leaders' actions since the previous inspection have secured improvements in the teaching of reading, and in pupils' progress and attainment in this subject. Leaders communicate their high expectations for teaching and pupils' learning very clearly. Improvements are now beginning to be realised in other subjects.

- All aspects of the early years provision are well led.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are committed to providing challenge and support for the school and to holding leaders to account for raising the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They are working to develop a better understanding of data about the school's performance and what this tells them about the quality of teaching. They are beginning to use this knowledge to check the school's work for themselves and to understand how underperformance is being tackled. Governors have worked with senior leaders to address the issues identified in the previous inspection, but recognise that some have not been fully addressed, and that they need a greater understanding of the processes that will help them to carry out this work effectively. They are working to ensure the school's website is improved so it meets requirements. Within the governing body, individuals are allocated roles and responsibilities, but not all have the knowledge and skills they need to carry out their duties effectively. Governors manage the budget carefully. They know how the additional monies are spent to support disadvantaged pupils and develop sport within the school. They are developing an understanding of the impact this spending is having on pupils' achievement and on the physical health and well-being of pupils. Governors have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance is linked to promotion and salary progression.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming and courteous. They feel listened to by adults. They are proud of their school and are proud of the contribution they are able to make.
- Pupils are confident that the school's procedures help them to behave well. They are sure that if they have any problems adults are there to support them, and any difficulties will be resolved quickly. Pupils recognise that some pupils find behaving well difficult, and consider they are supported well to improve.
- Pupils enjoy each other's company and work and play together harmoniously. Comments from pupils such as, 'Everyone is friendly in this school and we can all work together,' illustrate their confidence and enjoyment of school. Pupils have a well developed sense of right and wrong and through their day-to-day interactions demonstrate an appreciation of the British values of tolerance, respect and democracy.
- The school has taken effective action to improve attendance, which for almost all pupils is now above average. Access to the breakfast club supports many to arrive in good time for school and ensures they have a calm and positive start to their day at school.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning. Most sustain their concentration, listen carefully to adults, confidently offer ideas and answer questions, and work hard. The good presentation of their work in books reflects the pride pupils have in their achievements. Occasionally some pupils cause minor low-level disruption in lessons, usually because they lose interest in their work, teachers generally manage this well so the impact on pupils' learning is small.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school site is secure and access to it is managed well. Parents and staff are confident that the school keeps pupils safe. Close working relationships with families and partnerships with outside agencies puts pupils' welfare at the heart of the school's thorough procedures. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults take good care of them.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and know what steps they would take if they feel unhappy or concerned about anything. They understand the different kinds of bullying, including name calling and cyber-bullying and are clear about what steps they should take if it happens to them.
- Pupils enjoy playtimes because they are managed and supervised well. Zoned areas for different types of play, and a wide variety of play equipment ensure that pupils are kept safe and are able to enjoy time with their friends.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is inconsistent in its impact. In Years 1 to 6, not all teachers take sufficient account of what pupils already know and can do. As a result teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons is not always accurate enough to ensure that the activities they plan will take all pupils' learning forwards at a good rate.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection but the school's policy is not consistently applied by all teachers. Teachers do not always help pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Next steps for improvement are sometimes identified but are often vague and do not help to move pupils' learning on. Pupils often do not follow up on the challenges their teachers set, or make the corrections requested by their teachers. The impact of marking and providing feedback to pupils is sometimes lost because of this inconsistent practice.
- Pupils' written work often contains spelling errors. Teachers often correct these but do not insist that pupils learn to spell them correctly, so errors, often of the most commonly used words, persist in pupils' work. There is no whole-school procedure for teaching spelling to ensure pupils' skills build progressively.
- The most-able pupils are not consistently set work that challenges them or requires them to think for themselves. This is particularly evident in mathematics where the work of the most-able pupils' indicates that they often find their work relatively easy.
- Across the school many pupils find understanding and using the language associated with mathematics difficult. The teaching of mathematical vocabulary is not planned well enough to ensure pupils become competent in its use and this hinders their ability to tackle mathematical challenges with confidence. However, improvements in teaching since the previous inspection have secured better achievement for girls in mathematics and all pupils now have increased opportunities to use their mathematics skills in other subjects. They also write more in other subjects and this has supported improvement in grammar and punctuation skills. The presentation of work is now good.
- Pupils make good progress in reading because the teaching of reading is good. The sharing of a class book, linking reading tightly to the class topic and access to one-to-one support are some of the actions taken that have supported pupils to achieve well in this subject.
- Teachers use resources effectively to stimulate pupils' interest and challenge them to think for themselves. For example, Year 3 pupils developed a good understanding of how to use speech marks in their writing by identifying speech in newspaper articles.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding frequently to move their learning on in a timely manner. Relationships are positive and pupils confidently offer ideas and answer questions, secure in the knowledge that their contribution will be valued.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and deployed effectively. They are well briefed when providing in-class or additional targeted support for individuals and small groups. They confidently and effectively help pupils who need extra help to progress in, for example, their phonic knowledge (the sounds letters make), in reading or in mathematics.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is inconsistent, particularly in writing and mathematics. This has led to variable results at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- In 2014 by the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment overall was significantly below average in all subjects. In Year 6 pupils' attainment in writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling fell compared to the previous year and was significantly lower than the national average. The school

sustained an improving trend in pupils' attainment in reading. School data and pupils' current work indicate that effective school action to raise standards is working. In both Year 2 and Year 6, attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, has improved and is already much closer to the 2014 national average.

- Progress in Years 3 to 6 is improving but is not consistent between classes and year groups. Action taken to improve writing and mathematics is beginning to make a difference. Where teaching is effective, pupils make good progress. In Year 6 this year all pupils have made at least the expected progress for their age, in writing, and a proportion very close to that found nationally have made at least expected progress in mathematics. All pupils have made at least expected progress in reading, and in all subjects more pupils are working at the higher Levels 5 and 6 than in previous years.
- Pupils' accuracy in spelling is not good as their application of grammar and their accuracy in the use of punctuation. It is their errors in spelling that holds back their overall attainment in this aspect of writing.
- The school's work to improve the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils has been effective, notably those receiving targeted support for reading and mathematics. The gaps between the attainment of this group of pupils and other pupils nationally and that of their classmates is closing quickly but it is not yet eradicated. In 2014, compared to other Year 6 pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were a year behind in mathematics and over two terms behind in writing. They were just over a term behind in reading. Compared to their classmates, they were less than a term behind in each subject.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is improving but their progress is inconsistent between classes. Their progress slows in lessons where expectations of what they can achieve are too low.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress in relation to their starting points. Precisely focused support helps these pupils to achieve well.

The early years provision is good

- Since the previous inspection, the good quality of education in the Nursery and Reception classes has been sustained. Almost all children make good progress, and some make rapid progress, from their starting points. As a result, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is increasing and is now close to the national average. Children achieve well and are well prepared for when they start in Year 1.
- The leader works with all staff to collect and analyse a wide range of information about children's learning that allows their progress to be tracked effectively. Staff check how well activities are helping children to learn and provision is continually modified to ensure it meets children's changing needs.
- The school works closely with parents prior to children starting school. As a result children settle quickly and soon develop very positive attitudes to school and to learning. Parents are confident their children are safe and looked after very well. Children's 'Learning Journeys' and their writing and mathematics books provide parents with good information about the progress their children are making.
- Teaching is good. All staff contribute to the planning of activities indoors and outside. There is a strong emphasis on developing children's communication skills, and an enjoyment of reading and writing. Staff take account of children's interests and make good use of the range of resources available to them to provide stimulating and engaging activities.
- By the end of their reception year most children, including the most able, are able to concentrate and persevere for extended periods. Activities are interesting encourage children to use their imagination. Staff are skilled at engaging children in activities and at using questioning to extend children's learning.
- Well established routines help children to build their confidence and work happily together. Children behave well and respond positively to adults' high expectations. They develop supportive, warm relationships with each other and adults.

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	122563
Local authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	461979

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	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mick Gillott
Headteacher	Louise Regan
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2013
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