

Old Hall Junior School

Old Road, Chesterfield, Derbyshire S40 3QR

Inspection dates

4–5 February 2016

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Require improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior and subject leaders are not clear about the impact of the actions they take in an effort to improve pupil outcomes and the quality of teaching and learning. They rely too much on good intentions and not enough on solid evidence to inform their opinions of the school.
- School leaders have not monitored and evaluated the quality of pupils' learning often enough or with enough rigour. They are not as well informed as they need to be to improve pupils' outcomes.
- Teaching and learning are not consistently good. The stronger practice seen in some parts of the school is not shared well enough to improve the quality of learning for all pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants do not have consistently high expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons. Pupils are not expected to undertake extended pieces of work, such as writing, on a regular basis to practise and embed their skills.
- Teachers do not use assessment practices to identify the next steps in learning for pupils consistently well. The work they set for pupils is not always matched to pupils' abilities closely enough.
- Pupils are not always clear about what they are learning or why. Opportunities to use and apply their learning to practical and real-life situations, for example in mathematics, are limited.
- Outcomes are not good enough for particular groups of pupils. Lower-attaining and disadvantaged pupils do not make as much progress or achieve as well as they should.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders have a strong commitment to the school and its pupils. Governors, staff and parents share their ambitions for the academic outcomes and personal development of every child.
- The school's values are ever present in the actions of staff and pupils. This leads to pupils' high standards of behaviour, courtesy and respect towards each other and visitors to the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is consistently good over time. They feel valued and relish the many opportunities to undertake roles of responsibility.
- Practices for the safeguarding of pupils are effective, with extensive documentation showing the school's commitment to keeping children safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of school leadership by:
 - ensuring that senior and subject leaders clearly identify how they will assess the impact of their work, the success of initiatives designed to improve the achievement of all pupils and the quality of teaching
 - creating and rigorously following a planned timetable of actions which will check and measure the impact of teaching and learning on pupils' achievement
 - identifying areas of the school where teaching and learning are strongest and sharing that good practice so that teaching improves.

- Improve outcomes for pupils, especially lower-attaining and disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - raising teachers' expectations and aspirations of the quantity and quality of work produced by pupils in lessons
 - more regularly providing pupils with extended opportunities to use and apply their learning in order to deepen their understanding
 - developing greater consistency and quality in teachers' assessments of pupils' learning in order to inform the next planned steps in their learning
 - communicating effectively to pupils what they are expected to learn, and why
 - increasing the rates of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics for lower-attaining and disadvantaged pupils so that the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally closes rapidly.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management **requires improvement**

- Senior and subject leaders are not sufficiently clear about the impact of the work they do on raising standards across the school. They do not always consider how they will assess the impact of their actions. Leaders' lack of clarity means that some plans for improvement represent a list of intended actions, the effectiveness of which are not fully analysed or understood. Leaders often rely on anecdotal evidence or suppositions that cannot be substantiated. As a result, their views on the quality of teaching and learning in different subjects and of pupils' achievement are sometimes inaccurate.
- Senior and subject leaders do not check on the quality of pupils' work often enough. The current system to ensure that pupils' work is reviewed regularly and rigorously is not implemented consistently. This means that leaders are not clear enough about standards or how to help colleagues develop their teaching further. Consequently, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning are not being addressed in a timely fashion and pupils' progress is slowed.
- Teaching and learning across the school are not consistently good. Senior leaders have correctly identified where teaching is strongest and provided professional development opportunities for a number of teachers, designed to improve their teaching further. However, leaders have not acted quickly enough to share the benefits of this training with other teachers and teaching assistants. This has delayed any impact the training may have on raising pupils' attainment and progress across the school.
- The headteacher and her team show a strong sense of care and responsibility towards the pupils. The school's values and behaviour code have been developed and embedded over time and all pupils respond well to them. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated in the school. Pupils' good behaviour and attitudes reflect this positive aspect of leadership.
- Leaders have evaluated the performance of the school to be slightly above that found during the inspection. They have correctly identified a number of development areas within the school's plan for improvement, but not addressed these with sufficient urgency. Leaders are aware of the need to increase the rates of progress for all pupils, and the most vulnerable groups of pupils in particular.
- Subject leaders are aware of their roles and responsibilities but their knowledge and understanding of their particular area of responsibility varies. Where it is strongest, subject leaders undertake scrutinies of pupils' work and teachers' planning. Some make judgements on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress over time, but this practice is not consistent. Effective and accurate assessment systems are not yet embedded and this limits the ability of leaders to use current data to make accurate judgements on pupils' achievements or support teachers in improving pupils' outcomes.
- The school's curriculum is broad and balanced. Work in books shows that a range of subjects is covered over time, often with a focus on the acquisition of knowledge. There is less evidence of investigations and pupil-led learning, and this is supported by Year 6 pupils who told inspectors that they would like to have more opportunities and resources to undertake scientific investigations. A wide range of extra-curricular and enrichment activities support pupils' learning and achievement outside the classroom.
- Leaders use additional funding, such as the pupil premium and the sports and physical education funding, to offer wider opportunities to pupils. They use these funds to extend equality of opportunity such as access to free music tuition for disadvantaged pupils, believing that such enrichment activities support academic achievement. The deputy headteacher is now responsible for the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils and this recent move reflects leaders' commitment to improving educational outcomes for this group of pupils.
- The school's values effectively support pupils' moral and social development. Pupils of all ages are polite, well mannered and courteous towards each other and adults. By the time they reach Year 6, many of them hold positions of responsibility, which they value highly and take very seriously. For many, this provides a taste of democracy and a practical insight into fundamental British values with elections taking place. Discussions with pupils of different ages identified that pupils' cultural awareness is not as well developed, particularly in relation to the traditions and beliefs of other communities and religions in Britain.
- Parental views of the school are almost entirely positive. Where there is dissatisfaction, this often relates to specific issues which have not been addressed to the satisfaction of individuals, rather than widespread concerns.
- The school has received limited support from the local authority in recent years. The lack of regular and robust challenge to senior leaders has had little impact on the school's improvement over time.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors understand their role in working with senior leaders to set the future direction for the school. They are ambitious for the school and its pupils. The Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body lead the governors effectively. Regular skills audits ensure that the range of skills and experience of other governors are utilised and, where there is a gap, recruitment to the governing body is focused on addressing this. Governors reflect on their own performance, finishing each meeting with the question, 'What have we done tonight to improve outcomes for our pupils?' They evaluate the governing body's performance annually through the involvement of external education professionals.
- Governors challenge senior leaders to account for the outcomes of pupils, including particular groups of pupils, such as those in receipt of the pupil premium. Governors are aware of performance data and know how additional funding is spent. However, their knowledge of the impact of such funding is not as strong, or as timely, as it should be in order to hold leaders fully to account. Governors play a part in the management of teachers' performance, challenging the headteacher to account for, and justify, any performance-related salary increases for staff.
- Governors undertake regular training. Induction training ensures that they are effective in their roles as quickly as possible. Additional courses ensure that they meet statutory requirements for aspects such as child protection and the safeguarding of pupils from extremism. Policies are reviewed in accordance with an annual timetable and there is good evidence that governors read and challenge the contents to ensure that documents are fully applicable and appropriate for the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Senior leaders and governors review practices, using their collective experiences to ensure that the school meets statutory requirements. Incidents and concerns about pupils' welfare or behaviour are well documented. Leaders and school staff are vigilant for pupils who may be at risk of harm, with all staff indicating that they have read and understood their responsibilities towards every child.
- Leaders ensure that all necessary training, such as first aid and safeguarding, is up to date, with a comprehensive recording system in place. Risk assessments are reviewed regularly and there is good evidence that the school amends them in light of current guidance and in-house experiences. The overwhelming majority of parents speak highly of the care given to their children when they have additional health or learning needs. Pupils are unanimous that school is safe place where adults and fellow pupils will help them in times of need.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

requires improvement

- Teaching across the school, and over time, is not consistently good. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons are not always high enough. The quantity of work produced by pupils is often much less than might be expected from pupils of a similar age. There is limited evidence of pieces of writing or mathematical challenges designed to allow pupils to extend, practise and master their newly learned skills.
- Teachers are not as effective as they need to be in identifying and communicating the next steps in learning for pupils. Their assessment of pupils' work does not always accurately identify what pupils can do and what they need to do next to improve further. This lack of precision means that on too many occasions pupils are not clear about what they are learning or why they are undertaking a piece of work. It also results in tasks that are not always matched well enough to the needs and abilities of pupils, and this slows their learning.
- The impact of teaching assistants and additional adults on pupils' learning is variable. They are often assigned to support specific groups of pupils, identified by the class teacher. Where the impact on pupils' progress in lessons is greatest, pupils are encouraged to develop their own thinking and ideas through skilfully chosen questions and well-timed intervention. However, on too many occasions, teaching assistants are passive observers for extended periods during lessons and this reduces their contribution to pupils' learning.
- Work in mathematics books shows that opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge are variable. As pupils progress through the school, there is an increasing emphasis on particular written methods for calculations, with resources and a range of techniques designed to deepen learning used less frequently.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers know their subject and their pupils well. They place learning into a context which is relevant to the pupils. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and how this will be

assessed. In a Year 4 writing lesson, pupils were observed supporting each other's learning through peer assessment activities. Pupils were able to extend and deepen their own learning by identifying strengths in the work of their classmates and using their own subject knowledge to suggest improvements.

- Pupils make stronger progress in lessons where teachers use their subject knowledge to plan activities that stimulate interest and extend pupils' understanding and inquisitiveness. A good example of this was seen in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, where pupils were challenged to use their mathematical reasoning to investigate prime numbers. The teacher's well-thought-out questions engaged every pupil and led to a rich mathematical discussion on the properties of numbers, with the teacher modelling appropriate technical language and expecting pupils to use it in return. The responses of the pupils to this illustrated that they were often asked to undertake such challenges, and they confirmed that mathematical reasoning and problem solving were a regular part of their mastery of the subject.
- Leaders place a high priority on reading and all pupils take part in reading activities at the same time each day. Teachers plan activities to develop pupils' reading and comprehension skills, with groups of pupils from each class working unsupervised during these sessions. Inspectors observed a group of highly engaged Year 5 pupils taking turns to read to each other under the leadership of another pupil, identified as 'the boss'. They read with fluency, using a range of strategies when a new or challenging word or phrase emerged. Their engagement and focus on their work was all the more noteworthy, given that they were working in the school hall which was being prepared for lunchtime.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils take pride in their work, their appearance and their school. By the time they reach Year 6, they are confident individuals who can express mature, well-informed opinions about their learning as well as the school. They listen attentively and respectfully to each other, offering considered responses which are well received. A good example of this took place during a meeting with an inspector, during which pupils used what they had learned about the causes of the Second World War to enter into a debate about whether it was the correct decision for Britain to become involved.
- Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with dignity and respect, providing very effective role models for pupils. Pupils believe they are listened to and can give examples of when school leaders and teachers have acted on their comments and observations. Pupils enjoy and value the responsibilities that increase with age, with a range of opportunities available to harness their many talents and skills. The work of the Mini Leaders can be seen in their organisation and support for lunchtime play, while the recent election of Bronze Ambassadors has heightened pupils' awareness of democratic principles.
- Pupils feel safe from harm and are able to identify the steps taken by the school to keep them safe. Parents overwhelmingly support this view. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe in different situations. The school offers support for pupils, and their parents, in relation to internet safety and the use of social media through its easily accessible website. School leaders are vigilant to other forms of risk to pupils such as extreme views and domestic violence, and respond quickly where they have concerns.
- Pupils of different ages discuss fundamental British values such as democracy, elections, the rule of law, equality, respect and tolerance. Their behaviour in and around school suggests that these are not just taught but also understood. They collaborate and cooperate well in lessons and this reflects well on their social and moral education. Pupils' knowledge of other religions and cultures is less well developed and opportunities for them to develop their spiritual awareness are not regularly planned into activities such as assemblies.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good and pupils of all ages take pride in ensuring that this is the case. They are crystal clear about the expectations placed on them to behave well and are certain that they can rely on other pupils to meet these expectations as well. Pupils have total confidence that adults in school will listen to them and act promptly and effectively on their behalf if they have an issue. As one Year 6 pupil put it, 'There is always someone standing beside us.'
- Pupils speak very highly of the school's Bringing Friends Together initiative. They trust the group of pupils involved in this to help address issues, which are shared directly or through worry boxes. Pupils say that bullying and name calling are rare. The school's comprehensive recording system supports the pupils' view that incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent.

- Pupils' attendance is consistently above the national average and they arrive promptly for school each day. Playground routines are well embedded and pupils line up smartly and quickly before entering the building. They move around the school calmly, showing courtesy and consideration towards each other and adults, including those who are visitors to the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their attention and engagement in lessons only wanes when teaching is not well matched to their abilities. Very occasionally, when not under direct adult supervision, the behaviour of a minority of pupils dips.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' achievement data for Key Stage 2 in 2015 show that the proportion of lower-attaining and disadvantaged pupils making the progress expected for pupils of their age is below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. No disadvantaged pupils made more than expected progress in reading or writing. Much lower proportions of lower-attaining pupils made expected or more than expected progress in reading and mathematics than was seen nationally.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately one year behind other pupils in their class in reading, writing and mathematics. Against other pupils, nationally, they were at least half a year behind in reading and writing and almost a year behind in mathematics. Trends over time are inconclusive as a result of the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils in each year group.
- Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment above those typically seen nationally. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment continues to be above national figures in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly at the higher levels. The school meets the current floor standards for attainment and progress.
- In 2015 attainment was strongest in reading and writing, with mathematics less strong but broadly in line with the national average. Girls performed more strongly than boys at higher levels of attainment in reading and writing but not in mathematics. The most-able pupils typically attain well, although 2015 saw an uncharacteristic dip in the amount of progress they made during their time in Key Stage 2. The very small proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs result in unreliable statistical data. However, inspectors saw strong evidence in books to show the impact of well-planned support and teaching adaptations which were improving outcomes for these pupils.
- In 2015 the proportions of pupils making expected levels of progress over time were broadly in line with national figures in reading and writing but below in mathematics. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress was well below average in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils' work is assessed and moderated within the school and among a local cluster of schools to assist in judging standards. Leaders have introduced a revised internal assessment system to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. This is still a work in progress and not yet fully reliable, with some examples of over-inflated assessments of attainment and progress since the start of this academic year. Work in books suggests that pupils make quicker progress in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6.

School details

Unique reference number	112669
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10010895

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Pennington
Headteacher	Mrs S Stone
Telephone number	01246 273801
Website	www.oldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@oldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 November 2010

Information about this school

- Old Hall Junior School is an average sized school set in an area of social and economic advantage on the outskirts of Chesterfield.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is significantly below the national average. This funding provides extra support for pupils who are known to be, or have been, eligible for free school meals or are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- In 2014 and 2015 the school met the government's current floor targets, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 13 lessons, covering all year groups, including one which was observed jointly with the headteacher. They listened to pupils reading, talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 79 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter which was hand-delivered to the lead inspector. Inspectors took note of the four responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupils' questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including: the school's own self-evaluation of current performance and plans for improvement; the school's most recent information on the achievement and progress of pupils; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the school's most recent information relating to the attendance of pupils.
- The inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Clive Worrall	Ofsted Inspector
Peter Bell	Ofsted Inspector

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