

# Highfield Hall Primary School

Highfield Lane, Chesterfield S41 8AZ

<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Leaders have successfully improved the quality of teaching since the last inspection so that it is now good. As a result, pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors understand their roles. They make regular visits to school to see it in action. This helps them to form a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school.
- Pupils behave well around school. They have good manners and are considerate of each other's views during lessons.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are taught how to keep themselves safe, including on the internet.
- Pupils develop good personal and social skills. They enjoy the opportunities that are offered to them to take part in learning beyond their classrooms.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, which contribute to their good progress.
- The curriculum provides a wide range of learning opportunities to engage the interests of the pupils.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years because teaching and learning are good. Children make good progress so that they are well prepared to start Year 1.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some subject leaders are new to their roles. They have not drawn up plans for improvement in enough detail for leaders and governors to be able to hold them to account.
- Too few pupils are making better than expected progress in mathematics because opportunities to develop their reasoning skills are limited.
- Sometimes, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for all pupils to be able to achieve their best.
- Pupils do not have a clear understanding of religions and cultures that are different from their own.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - leaders' plans for improvement are sufficiently detailed with timescales and measurable outcomes so that leaders and governors can hold them more rigorously to account
  - teachers provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to improve their knowledge of religions and cultures that are different from their own.
  
- Raise the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress by:
  - making sure that the level of challenge for all groups of pupils is high enough for them to achieve the levels they are capable of in all subjects
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning skills in mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and governors are ambitious for the pupils. They want them to achieve well in all aspects of school life.
- The headteacher has the confidence of the staff. Staff enjoy working at the school and believe it is well led and managed.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be done to bring about further improvements. This is because they visit classrooms regularly, check pupils' books and talk to pupils about their work.
- Over the last year, there have been some changes to staffing. This has been partly due to staff leaving or staff taking maternity leave. Several teachers have returned to school this year and a much more stable staff team is now in place.
- Leaders manage the performance of teachers effectively. Professional development is well used to support teachers to improve their practice.
- Leaders have introduced a new system for tracking pupils' progress. The headteacher meets with teachers regularly to check the progress pupils are making. Interventions are put in place to make sure that pupils who need additional help get the support they need. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- The curriculum is broad and engages pupils' interests. Pupils enjoy attending residentials and trips, such as the visit to the crooked church spire in Chesterfield which enhanced pupils' understanding during their design technology project about building a strong tower.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. However, pupils do not have a clear understanding of religions and beliefs that are different from their own. Nonetheless, they learn about different cultures through topics such as 'Uganda'. During the inspection, pupils were enjoying an African drumming session with a visiting music specialist. Pupils were enthralled as they each played a drum, keeping the beat well as an ensemble.
- Leaders make effective use of pupil premium funding. Pupils benefit from additional support or small-group teaching. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress.
- Additional government funding for primary sport is also well used. Pupils access a wide range of sports and compete in sporting events. Older pupils enjoy 'bikeability' training to help them to learn to cycle safely.
- The role of the subject leader has been developed since the last inspection. However, changes in staffing mean that several leaders are new to their roles. Leaders receive training to undertake their roles effectively, and they have begun to check on the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Leaders have drawn up plans for improvement but many of these are not sufficiently detailed for governors to be able to check the progress that is being made.
- Leaders promote British values well throughout the school. Pupils speak clearly about activities that help them understand about rules, democracy, and people's rights and responsibilities. There is an elected school council. During a visit to Whittington Green Secondary School, older pupils learned about the importance of making careful choices, and having rules and responsibilities, through art and sporting activities.
- The leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is working jointly with the headteacher to develop her new role. Pupils have the appropriate support that they need and she receives information about how well they are progressing. She acknowledges that she must now implement a clear action plan to make sure that the provision for these pupils is monitored more tightly.
- School leaders valued the previous guidance they received from the local authority. The local authority no longer provides additional support for the school as it judges the school to be good.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors implemented the recommendations from the review of governance that was completed following the previous inspection. As a result, there are now committees to focus in more detail on particular aspects of school life, such as finance, pupils' welfare and school improvement. Governors receive training so that they can understand information about pupils' attainment and progress more accurately.

- Governors have a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school because they ask challenging questions of leaders. They also visit the school regularly to see it in action for themselves. They look at pupils' books and discuss their work with them.
- Governors hold annual competitions for pupils to take part in. Pupils can enter a writing competition or demonstrate their choral speaking skills with their peers by learning a poem to perform together. This offers additional opportunities for governors to become involved in the life of the school and to get to know the pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Appropriate checks are made when new staff start working at the school. Leaders keep appropriate records. They work closely with parents and other professionals when this is appropriate. All staff receive the relevant training in safeguarding.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher has high expectations of the staff and he visits classrooms to check the quality of teaching. He knows where further improvements can be made and he has put plans in place to bring this about.
- Teachers plan lessons that carefully build on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. For example, a teacher used her assessments of pupils' learning during the previous lesson to enable them to organise headings and sub-headings and correctly use captions. In this lesson, the most-able pupils were further challenged to improve their work by considering questions such as, 'Why is this a good opening sentence?'
- Most teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skills well to make sure that pupils understand the concepts that are being taught. However, occasionally, teachers' questions do not probe deeply enough for pupils of all abilities to understand concepts as well as they could. When this happens, pupils' progress slows and they become fidgety.
- Teachers give older pupils the opportunity to assess one another's work. They say that the comments their classmates make about their work help them to improve it. They also know that looking critically at other pupils' work helps them to improve their own skills too.
- Teachers make effective use of 'Target ticks' to challenge pupils to achieve well. Pupils respond positively to these 'Target Ticks'. One pupil explained, 'It helps me to remember what I have to do in my writing.' However, occasionally, pupils say that the work is a little easy for them and they are capable of being challenged to do more.
- Pupils' 'Exciting writing' books show that they make good progress over time. Pupils have opportunities to write at length in a range of subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils are taught appropriate strategies for their calculations which they use carefully.
- Pupils' books show that they make good progress in mathematics over time. However, pupils have limited opportunities to develop their mathematical reasoning skills.
- Pupils develop their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across a wide range of subjects. Teachers make good links between subjects, for example by discussing parallel lines during an art lesson. However, pupils' books show that opportunities for them to be independent in presenting their work across a wide range of subjects is limited.
- Pupils say they receive regular homework. They enjoy the chance to continue their learning at home.
- Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, share ideas and express their own opinions. In one lesson about the Great Fire of London, the teacher used sounds to simulate the crackling of a fire, while pupils 'put on' their virtual fire helmets and discussed how it might have felt to be there. This led to pupils writing imaginative descriptions in the form of a diary entry.
- In another lesson, older pupils were challenged to think very deeply about extremism. The teacher handled this topic with great sensitivity, in a way that was highly appropriate for the age of these pupils. The pupils said that this was helping them to be prepared for understanding the world as they grew older. They discussed this topic in a very mature and sensible way.

## **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 enjoy school and feel safe. They are encouraged to share their views in class and they listen to each other politely.
- Pupils enjoy the system of house points that is used to reward good behaviour and learning. Pupils are motivated to work hard and behave well by the medals and certificates that are given out during assembly on Fridays.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take responsibility around school, such as being house captains or organising book bags. Pupils can volunteer to contribute to the writing of the school newspaper. Pupils are currently organising a book club for other pupils to attend.
- Pupils say that bullying and name-calling do not happen often. They are confident that if they have a concern there is a trusted adult they can tell, who will deal with it for them.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They are knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and move around school sensibly between lessons. The school is calm and orderly.
- At lunchtime, play leaders organise activities and games which support pupils to be able to play well together. At playtime, pupils engage in conversation or play running games together. Pupils say that they benefit from having a break in the fresh air to help them concentrate in their lessons.
- Pupils are respectful towards each other and adults. In lessons, they listen to each other's views carefully.
- Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced over recent years and is now just below the national average. The headteacher monitors attendance and takes appropriate steps when it falls below expectations, including contacting parents.

## **Outcomes for pupils** are good

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress from their different starting points.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in phonics (the sounds that letters represent) by the end of Year 1 is now above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 are above average.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels is average in reading and above average in writing. In 2015, too few pupils attained the higher level in mathematics.
- The proportion of pupils making expected progress in reading and mathematics is average, but the proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing is above average. The proportion of low- and middle-ability pupils making more than expected progress in mathematics was too low in 2015.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, with a higher proportion of them making better than expected progress in mathematics than do nationally.
- Current school assessments show that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress. In 2015, by the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making more than expected progress in reading and writing was higher than that of other pupils in school.

## **Early years provision** is good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader establishes good relationships with parents when children start school. As a result, children settle into school life well.
- The leader has a clear understanding of the strengths of the early years provision and what must be done to improve it even further.

- A large majority of children enter Nursery and Reception with skills and knowledge below those typically expected for their age. However, children make good progress in the early years and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has risen steadily. It is now in line with national averages. As a result, children are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children achieve well because learning opportunities are well matched to their needs and interests. For example, children's language skills, which are often limited when they start in Nursery or Reception, are successfully developed through targeted activities such as retelling stories and encouraging children to develop early writing skills both indoors and outdoors.
- Parents are encouraged to play a full part in their child's learning. The early years leader runs workshops to provide parents with information which helps them support their child's learning at home. Parents are encouraged to share information with the teacher about their child's achievements at home. These successes are celebrated in school.
- Children behave well. They share toys and equipment sensibly. They play and learn alongside each other harmoniously.
- Leaders make effective use of both the indoor and outdoor areas to promote children's learning. However, the leader is aware that the environment could be further enhanced in order to provide even more high-quality learning opportunities for these young children.
- There is a working party of parents who come into school to help with practical tasks such as painting fences, gardening and tidying the grounds. This is greatly appreciated by the school staff. The working party also raises funds, for example through a fashion show, which will help to develop the early years' outdoor area.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112667
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10008113
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Simons
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gary Martin
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 273 534
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.highfieldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk">www.highfieldhall.derbyshire.sch.uk</a>
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<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6–7 February 2014

## Information about this school

- Highfield Hall is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are White British and speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is average. This is additional government funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special education needs or disability is slightly above average. However, the proportion of pupils with education, health and care plans or statements of special educational needs is much lower than average.
- The school meets the government’s floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils’ attainment and progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 24 lessons or parts of lessons, some of which were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, leaders of four subjects, the leader with responsibility for pupils who have special educational needs or disability and the leader responsible for the early years.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' books with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors spoke with three groups of pupils and heard three pupils read.
- Inspectors met with two members of the governing body, held a telephone conversation with the Chair of the Governing Body and met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors observed pupils during playtime and spoke with parents as they brought their children to school in the morning.
- Inspectors took account of the 95 responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 13 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the online pupil survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to safeguarding and the school's plans for improvements.

## Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heidi Malliff	Ofsted Inspector
Christopher Mansell	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Martin	Ofsted Inspector



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