

# Hillary Primary School

Hillary Street, Pleck, Walsall WS2 9BP

## Inspection dates

23–24 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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased considerably and there have been many staff changes. These changes have diverted school leaders' attention away from school improvement matters and the standard of teaching and pupils' achievement have dropped.
- The rising standards seen up until 2014 fell back in 2015. Progress rates for current pupils have not yet recovered.
- Progress across Key Stage 2, in particular, is erratic. In some classes, teachers do not give pupils the right help when they do not understand their work. In addition, some of the most-able pupils do not get the challenge they need to push on swiftly with their learning.
- Attendance, while improving, is still below the national average.
- Across the school, assessment lacks precision. Some lessons are not pitched at the right level for different pupils' abilities. Teachers do not always make their expectations clear or check how well pupils understand their work during lessons.
- Some teaching assistants have not received enough training.
- In recent times, there has been little support from the local authority.
- Senior and middle leaders are capable and committed. Currently, however, their time and skills are not being used to best effect to improve the quality of teaching across the school. Consequently, governors' ambitious plans for school improvement have yet to be realised.

### The school has the following strengths

- Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is increasingly effective. Senior leaders know what needs to be done to get the school back on track.
- There is some consistently strong teaching, notably in the Year 6 classes.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are attentive in
- The provision in the early years is good. Children settle in quickly and get a good start to their education.
- Arrangements for keeping pupils safe at school work well.
- Staff promote worthy values that help pupils to develop responsible and considerate attitudes.

class and friendly to one another.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, by making sure that teachers:
  - provide sufficient challenge for the most-able pupils and helpful support for the least able
  - check the depth of pupils' understanding when explaining new work
  - adjust their explanations and classroom tasks in response to pupils' learning needs
  - make their expectations of what is to be achieved in a lesson very clear
  - check that pupils are listening when required.
  
- Improve the impact of the leadership and management on school improvement by making sure that:
  - leaders get the time and support they need in order to help teachers improve the quality of their work
  - assessment information is accurate and used to best effect when planning lessons
  - teaching assistants receive sufficient training so that they can do their jobs as well as possible
  - leaders continue to work with parents to improve the attendance of the small number of pupils who miss too much school for no good reason.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have responded to many changes at the school. The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly, there have been many staff changes and the leadership structure has been reorganised. In accommodating these changes, senior leaders have taken their eye off school improvement matters and academic standards have slipped.
- The headteacher has a clear vision and a proven track record of effective leadership over previous years at the school. She has been frustrated in her more recent plans because her attention has been taken away from teaching and learning, as she has dealt with problems caused by high staff turnover and school expansion. Nevertheless, she has maintained good standards of behaviour throughout the school and demonstrates a caring and supportive knowledge of each pupil's individual circumstances. She understands the school's current position and knows what needs to be done to get pupils' academic progress back on track.
- Following a reorganisation of the school's leadership structure in 2015, a capable and committed leadership team has been recruited. These leaders understand that some pupils are not making the progress they should and that systems for tracking their progress are not operating efficiently. They have plans in place to bring about the necessary improvements, but these plans have yet to be realised.
- Currently, middle leaders' skills and expertise are being used to ensure strong practice in their own classrooms, but not elsewhere. The assistant headteachers, for example, are spending most of their time teaching pupils in key year groups so they catch up, rather than working with staff to develop and improve the quality of teaching in the rest of the school. Having said this, the school leadership has forged links with other nearby schools, including a teaching school, and has sought advice from educational consultants. These actions have brought benefits as staff get the chance to share and learn from good practice.
- Beyond the advice that school leaders have sought for themselves, there has been little support from the local authority. The support that has been available has focused mainly on newly qualified teachers working at the school. Given the significant changes that have happened at Hillary Primary School and the recent drop in standards, this low level of local authority support is disappointing.
- The spending of pupil premium funds is planned carefully and information about its use, such as funding extra support in class or booster sessions and extra activities out of class, is readily available. It is clear, however, that this extra help is boosting the progress of disadvantaged pupils more successfully in Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2.
- The sports funding has brought about improvements across the school. The number of after-school sports clubs has risen, as have participation rates. Sports teachers work with pupils and class teachers to improve everyone's skills and confidence. Teachers' knowledge of how to teach different sports – volleyball or gymnastics, for example – has increased and pupils now take part in an increasing number of competitive events. A successful dance club has been established and the school dance squad has performed at several events. All of this helps to build a sense of pride, enjoyment and achievement in sport.
- The school provides a broad curriculum with many activities that help to increase pupils' awareness of the world, both near and far and past and present. Numerous well-presented display boards highlight the school's work to teach pupils about different aspects of human life, like democracy or religious belief. Indeed, the quality of teaching and experiences provided in subjects such as art, music, history or religious education is excellent at times.
- Pupils spoken to during this inspection explained how the school arranges activities and trips that help them to learn about others and consider different viewpoints. They know the difference between right and wrong and understand how the school's core values, such as respect, help to guide their actions and prepare them for different situations. Older pupils recently visited *The Skills Show* at the NEC to find out about future opportunities and options.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is effective. Last year, the governing body restructured and this resulted in a reduced, but more active, governing body. Governors who visited the school during the inspection presented as informed, realistic, articulate and ambitious. They provide firm support for the school leadership and have confidence in the headteacher's judgement, but also make sure they know what is going on.
  - Records from recent meetings show that governors ask plenty of questions to get the information they

need in order to do their job. They do not shy away from tough decisions and have made sure that weak teaching does not go unchallenged.

- Governors place a high value on the breadth of experience that the school currently provides to pupils, but also believe that standards at the school could, and should, be higher. They are keeping a watchful and informed eye on the school's work to make sure this happens.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school's procedures for checking the suitability of staff and visitors are thorough and efficient. Pupils are kept safe when they are in school and there are good levels of adult supervision throughout the school day. Staff receive regular training and guidance about what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. When needs be, the right information is shared with the right people in order to ensure that proper and timely action is taken. Records are up to date and stored securely.
- Leaders check that pupils attending alternative provision are kept safe.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Across the school, the quality of teaching varies in its effectiveness. In places, the pitch of challenge is not quite right because some teachers are unsure about what pupils can or cannot do.
- Observations in classrooms, checks on books and conversations with pupils and leaders all confirm that teaching does not build carefully enough on pupils' current levels of understanding. Sometimes, the most-able pupils are given work they can manage easily or teachers fail to adjust tasks or explanations when pupils do not understand. On other occasions, teachers ask questions but do not listen carefully enough to pupils' responses. This limits their awareness of how well pupils understand or are keeping up. All of these problems stem from shortcomings in assessment routines when planning and teaching lessons.
- In the main, the support provided by teaching assistants is helpful. Pupils who receive extra input, either in class or in small groups outside of the main classroom, definitely benefit from it. Nevertheless, aspects of practice could be improved. Specifically, some teaching assistants have not had sufficient training to help them understand how to best support pupils with specific needs. In addition, on two occasions during this inspection, teaching assistants were seen and heard talking loudly when the teacher was addressing the class. This was unnecessary and divided pupils' attention.
- Across the school there are pockets of highly effective practice and evidence of teaching that is improving as a result of training and support. Teaching staff are open to advice and respond positively to the guidance they are given. In recent times, however, school leaders' plans for supporting teaching in some year groups have been delayed by their other responsibilities in school. This has slowed the pace of improvement.
- In Year 6 classes, teaching is consistently strong. During guided reading lessons in all three Year 6 classes, for example, pupils made great strides forward in their understanding of inference. This was because the teachers used good-quality reading material, asked timely purposeful questions and made their expectations very clear. On top of this, a real enjoyment of reading shone out, both from the adults and the pupils. At one point, when pupils were prompted to examine the final pages of a story, there was an audible gasp of excitement as they eagerly turned and scanned the pages to find out what happened next.
- Teaching in subjects such as art, drama, music and French is imaginative and engaging. Pupils speak with great enthusiasm about the breadth of the school curriculum and inspectors were impressed by the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in the arts and humanities. Around the school, colourful displays, tuneful sounds, along with animated speech and actions in drama and foreign language lessons, speak volumes about the rich and varied curriculum provided at Hillary Primary School.
- In the younger classes, phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) teaching is done well. Staff have good subject knowledge and model language and letter sounds carefully and accurately.
- In all classes, relationships between pupils and staff are good. Teachers and pupils clearly enjoy each other's company and a climate of calm mutual respect is evident in every classroom.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.

- The school's arrangements for gathering information about pupils when they join the school are efficient and effective. Staff take time to find out about pupils' previous experiences, interests and needs and keep a close eye on how they settle in. Pupils who arrive from overseas and those who speak little or no English when they first start get very helpful support and soon become confident and relaxed at school.
- Adults are calm and act kindly towards pupils. In turn, pupils are thoughtful and considerate to one another and conflict is rare. Bullying of any sort is uncommon and pupils and staff know what they would do to stop it if it happened. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure at school.
- There are routines in place to ensure that pupils get praise when they deserve it and encouragement when they need it. Rewards such as 'terrific tickets' in class or 'special mentions' in assembly serve to recognise and reward pupils who have displayed positive attitudes or helpful behaviours. In addition, through their day-to-day conversations, and good-natured, easy manner with one another, adults and pupils show support and respect for all. In conversation with inspectors, pupils reported that 'they could be themselves at this school'.
- The school site is well maintained and kept secure. The arrangements for managing and supervising the large number of pupils at the school work extremely well. Staggered break and lunchtimes mean that space and time is used well and that movement around the school site is orderly and safe. If a playground accident does occur, pupils receive prompt first-aid attention.
- Well-thought-through routines for the registration and supervision of pupils at after-school clubs ensure that everyone is accounted for and looked after.
- Pupils feel safe at school and parents express confidence in the school's work to promote positive attitudes and safe behaviour.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are usually attentive to their teachers, respond quickly to instructions and work hard in lessons. They want to do well at school and most display positive attitudes most of the time. Whether at play or at work, they readily offer friendship and support to others and try to help out when they can.
- Over time, attendance has been below average and quite a few pupils have had periods of extended absence which has hindered their progress in school. School leaders are alert to this and actively promote the importance and benefits of regular attendance at school. Unexplained absence is followed up promptly and unnecessary absence is challenged. As a result, attendance is improving. The overall attendance figure for the current year to date is not far off the national average and persistent absence has reduced. This is the best attendance that the school has seen for a long time. This is encouraging and is clearly the result of leaders' attention to this important matter. The inclusion manager is doing a good job checking on patterns of absence and the reasons why pupils miss school.
- Exclusions from school are uncommon and are only used in response to a serious breach of school rules, such as fighting. Whenever an exclusion for poor behaviour has occurred, proper procedures have been followed and action taken to reduce the likelihood of repetition.

### **Outcomes for pupils**

### **require improvement**

- Pupils do not make enough progress in English or mathematics, especially across Key Stage 2.
- The achievement of pupils at Hillary Primary School presents a mixed picture. In recent times, progress rates in reading, writing and mathematics up until the end of Year 2 have been improving and standards have risen. Conversely, progress across Key Stage 2, which was very strong in 2013 and 2014, slowed significantly in 2015 and standards at the end of Year 6 dropped.
- Progress rates for current pupils are still not where they ought to be. There have been numerous changes of staff and changes in the way leaders and teachers assess pupils' progress. These changes have been managed more successfully in some parts of the school than in others. From Year 1 to Year 5, the current quality of teaching is variable and progress rates vary. Pupils make good progress in some classes, then slip back in others. Consequently, by the time they reach the Year 6 classes, where teaching is consistently strong, pupils have quite a bit of catching up to do. Some manage to do this, but quite a few do not.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not reach the same standards as others in the school. In 2015, these pupils were over a term behind their in-school peers and more than two terms behind others nationally in reading, writing and mathematics, with progress in mathematics presenting as the weakest area. This is a backward step from previous years. Indeed, just one year ago, school leaders received a letter of

congratulation from a government minister for the improving progress being made by disadvantaged pupils. This promising direction of travel subsequently stalled. Looking to the current picture, disadvantaged pupils are catching up with others in the Key Stage 1 classes. However, there is still more to be done to boost their progress across Key Stage 2.

- The achievement of the most-able pupils varies. Some do very well indeed and reach high standards. For others, work is too easy or they mark time waiting for other pupils to catch up. Overall, these pupils do well at school but, in some classes, they could do better if teachers' expectations were higher and work provided the right level of challenge for their abilities.
- Similarly, the progress of pupils who have special educational needs or disability presents a mixture of significant success for some and disappointing outcomes for others. School leaders are quick to identify needs and put support in place, but the quality and impact of this support is variable. School records and inspectors' checks identified that progress for these pupils, particularly in mathematics, is slower than it ought to be.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- The majority of children start school in either Nursery or Reception with a level of knowledge and skill below that typical for their age. There is good communication with parents and this, together with calm and predictable school routines, helps children to settle in quickly and grow in confidence when they begin school.
- The well-organised provision helps children to make good progress and, year after year, the proportions reaching a good level of development have increased. In 2015, it was not far below the national figure. Given children's starting points, this success is to be commended.
- Assessment in the early years classes operates with much greater efficiency than that seen elsewhere in the school. Consequently, teaching is effective because it is more closely matched to children's learning needs. Teachers plan purposeful tasks and children are keen to participate and stay busy throughout the school day. At times, however, adults do a bit too much for them or make choices that children could usefully make for themselves. This limits the development of their decision-making skills and curbs their independence.
- The school's long-serving early years leader retired last year. This leader provided strong and capable leadership which created an orderly well-managed early years environment where expectations were clear. A new leader has now been appointed and is due to start in April 2016. This new leader has a positive legacy of good achievement and behaviour on which to build further. The stage is set, therefore, to develop the provision further so that children have even more opportunity to explore, grow and develop in different areas of learning.
- Statutory welfare requirements are met and children are kept safe when indoors and outside.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131511
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10000822

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.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	653
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Paula Whitehouse
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lynne Cherry
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 720812
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.hillary.walsall.sch.uk">www.hillary.walsall.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:postbox@hillary.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@hillary.walsall.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6–7 October 2011

## Information about this school

- Hillary Primary School is considerably larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Approximately 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and around 75% speak English as a second language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is just below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is above the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- In 2014, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The unvalidated results for 2015 indicate that the school will meet the 2015 floor standards.
- The school offers morning or afternoon early years provision for nursery-age children and full-time early years provision for reception-age children.
- A small number of pupils attend alternative provision at a non-registered provider called Re-Entry.
- The school provides after-school care on the school site. This was checked during this inspection.
- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased considerably and there have been many changes of staff.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in all year groups. Some of these observations were carried out alongside school leaders. Inspectors also attended a school assembly, examined pupils' work in books and on display, and considered school test and assessment information.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and breaktimes, and when pupils were moving about the school site or attending the after-school child care.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, senior and middle leaders, a local authority adviser and three governors.
- By the end of the inspection, there were nine recent responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View), too few to generate a report. However, inspectors talked to some parents at school and looked at responses to Ofsted's online survey of staff and pupils' views. In addition, inspectors considered seven responses on Ofsted's paper questionnaire for school staff.
- A number of school documents were examined. These included: information about pupils' achievement and evaluations of the school's performance. Records relating to governance, staff performance management, behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised. The school's website was also checked.

## Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
James McNeillie	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lorraine Lord	Ofsted Inspector
Janet Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Sian Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Benjamin Taylor	Ofsted Inspector

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