

Hightown Junior, Infant and Nursery School

Hightown Road, Liversedge, West Yorkshire WF15 8BL

Inspection dates	20–21 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This rapidly improving school has a justifiably respected place in the local community.
- Leadership and management are good. The decisive and astute headteacher has restored staff morale following the previous inspection in December 2013, and has vastly improved provision.
- Staff and governors operate as a highly effective team. Together, they have brought about significant and sustained improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. This has accelerated pupils' progress and improved attainment across the school.
- Standards have risen rapidly since the last inspection. There is good achievement by most pupils in relation to their different needs and starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are proud to be pupils at Hightown and are excellent ambassadors for their school.
- The school's work in keeping pupils safe and secure is good.
- In the majority of classes, teachers plan lessons that capture the interest of pupils and provide an exciting variety of experiences. These contribute successfully to pupils' good progress and their strong spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a good understanding of Britain's rich cultural heritage and different lifestyles.
- Parents express a very high degree of confidence and trust in the school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Provision in the early years requires improvement. There are inconsistencies in teaching which slow progress, particularly of the most-able children.
- Teaching in a small number of other classes is not consistently good. Teacher absence is affecting continuity and progression in learning.
- Leaders do not consistently check the quality of marking. As a result, some pupils do not have the benefit of learning from their mistakes and do not improve their work.
- The recording of serious behaviour incidents requires further detail.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that leaders:
 - robustly implement the marking policy
 - continually check that teachers give pupils effective feedback, identifying next steps in their learning and helping them improve their writing and mathematics work
 - record serious incidents of pupils' behaviour more precisely and with sufficient detail.
- Improve the impact of teaching on pupils' learning in those few classes where it is not consistently good so that it enables all pupils to reach their full potential by:
 - planning interesting activities that take full account of what pupils already know
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Improve the quality of provision in the early years so that all children, regardless of whether they are in Nursery or Reception classes, make consistently good progress, by:
 - improving the leadership and overview of early years organisation
 - using accurate assessment information to plan interesting and motivating activities which hold children's attention and enable all children, especially the more able, to make faster progress
 - providing challenge to enable children to think more deeply and find solutions to problems as they learn through play
 - ensuring routines are firmly established in the Nursery class so that children are clear of the teacher's expectations of good behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong and decisive leadership. He is supported very effectively by the skilled and highly committed members of the leadership team and the school's governing body.
- The concerted efforts of senior and middle leaders have rapidly raised staff morale and secured a strong, successful and united drive for improvement. They have accomplished this by increasing teachers' confidence, and by utilising and developing the skills of existing staff within school, in addition to appointing new staff.
- Leadership and governance at all levels have been significantly enriched through sharing expertise and by comprehensive training.
- The headteacher and a national leader of education have played a full and very effective role in developing strategies to improve and check the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. They also ensure the governing body are fully informed so that they too have a detailed knowledge of how teaching affects pupils' achievement. As a result, governors have strengthened their ability and effectiveness in assisting staff in the drive for improvement.
- The work of leaders, including governors, has ensured that the quality of teaching in most year groups is consistently good. Consequently, pupils' achievement is good and is rising rapidly.
- However, leadership is not yet outstanding because teaching in the early years and in a very few other classes is sometimes not as effective as it could be. Staff changes due to teacher absence have led to a slowing of improvements to the quality of teaching in these classes. Where teaching requires further development, leaders immediately provide valuable support.
- Leaders have improved pupils' attendance. Pupils' positive behaviour is testimony to the warm and supportive relationships at this school.
- Parents hold the school in extremely high regard. The responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire are very positive. The comments of those parents who spoke to the inspector were unanimously appreciative of the work of the school. Most made particular reference to the high-quality leadership, the improved teaching and the very supportive atmosphere, which helps their children to enjoy their work and do better at school.
- There is very positive liaison between this school and other schools through a teaching school alliance. This enables the school to secure an outward-facing culture where good and better teaching can thrive. The local authority has also provided timely and effective support, especially to improve and develop governance.
- The headteacher and governors manage the development of staff very effectively. Leaders are held to account for checking and improving the quality of teaching and the rate at which pupils make progress. They use information from these checks to plan high-quality professional development.
- Teachers are also challenged to account for their pupils' progress and to act quickly and purposefully on any recommendations. By doing so, the school is successfully using and improving staff skills.
- The school provides pupils with a wide range of sporting and creative activities. Around 96% of children in the school are involved in a lunchtime or after-school sporting club.
- Educational visits provide uplifting experiences. These include whole-school visits to the Yorkshire coast. Opportunities for learning and special experiences such as paddling with their friends and having fish and chips by the seaside help pupils to develop into well-balanced young people. This contributes to their very positive spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In addition, pupils have a good understanding of cultures other than their own through studies of major faiths and visits to their places of worship. A Muslim member of staff shares her own experiences to widen pupils' understanding of diverse modern British society.
- Staff provide pupils with good opportunities to widen their understanding of democracy and prepare them well for life in modern Britain. For example, they participate in elections to the school council, and visits by the local police and a magistrate give them a wider understanding of the rule of law.
- The curriculum is skilfully planned to ensure pupils develop the expected knowledge, skills and understanding in all subjects. They also cover aspects such as healthy lifestyles and cooking lessons.
- All staff work with conviction and empathy to sustain a very caring school community which strongly underpins a strong sense of belonging within the school, excellent relationships and behaviour.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve as well as other pupils. A 'closing the gap team' specifically focuses on pupils' achievement and provides a range of support activities. This enables almost every pupil entitled to pupil premium to make good progress, sometimes achieving better than their classmates and other pupils nationally.

- The school makes good use of the physical education (PE) and sports funding for primary schools. It has provided a wide range of sports including karate, football, fencing and dance. Pupils' well-being and healthy lifestyles are effectively encouraged and supported and pupils participate in numerous competitions.
- The school has introduced many new and successful policies. However, the marking policy is not consistently followed by all staff. This remains an area for improvement from the last inspection which has not been fully effective.
- The school keeps records of the few incidents of poor behaviour and responds to them in a well-considered manner. However, these records are currently not detailed enough. The school has recognised this and is currently implementing a new online system to improve the record-keeping.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors use their skills and expertise to challenge and support the leaders effectively. They are extremely proud of their school, have a determination for it to become outstanding and have ambitious plans for its future development.
 - The governing body have an accurate and thorough understanding of pupils' progress and the school's performance data in relation to national data. Through this they make a significant contribution to the way in which the school plans for improvement.
 - Governors use information about pupils' progress well when they review staff performance and pay progression. They ask leaders searching questions about all aspects of performance.
 - Governors have a very clear understanding of the school's finances, including pupil premium and primary sport funding, and check carefully to see if funding is making a positive difference. For example, they carefully monitor any external provision and take swift action if the activities are not of sufficient quality. Governors work tirelessly to close the gap in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others and have a deep understanding of the work done by the 'closing the gap' team.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clear systems and frequent training mean everyone is aware of their responsibility to protect pupils from harm. Staff know the procedures and have the confidence to take their concerns to leaders if they spot any signs of abuse or neglect. Leaders are alert to potential risks and know their pupils and families well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers establish very positive relationships with their pupils and have high expectations for their success. Teachers make good use of humour to motivate pupils so they are confident and not afraid to make a mistake.
- Teachers in most classes plan lively and varied activities that engage the interests of pupils and ensure they make swift progress in developing the essential skills of reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teachers skilfully use literature and exciting video clips to enthuse and motivate pupils. For example, in Year 5, pupils watched a video of a story of an alchemist. They thoughtfully considered the character, how he had put his dream before his family and his resulting regrets and memories. This encouraged pupils to think of their own lives and developed their skills of inferring and predicting.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard and pupils live up to their high expectations. Classrooms are orderly and stimulating. As a result, all groups of pupils are keen to learn and aim to do their best.
- In almost all classes staff make good use of accurate assessments of pupils' progress to set clear targets for them to achieve. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils' achievement well to challenge all groups of learners. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection, particularly for the most-able pupils. Occasionally, pupils are expected to do too much simple work, for example number calculations, before being moved on to more challenging work. This slows the progress of the most able.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout school. They bring skilled support to pupils of all abilities and particularly those who have special educational needs or disability. Teachers and support staff ensure pupils have time to reflect on their learning during the lesson and appropriately try things out for themselves.
- Teachers question pupils effectively to build on their prior learning. They help pupils develop important skills that support their learning. In particular, they increasingly promote their ability to be critical about their own work and resilient in tackling difficult ideas. This was seen to good effect in Years 5 and 6 where pupils constantly edit, refine and improve their work.

- A love of reading is strongly promoted throughout the school and in subjects other than English. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) is especially well organised and well-trained staff fully understand their role in supporting young readers.
- Writing skills are generally taught well. Teachers expect pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and accurately apply their good knowledge of grammar and punctuation skills. Pupils' handwriting skills are developed well by teachers and pupils willingly respond by producing well-presented, neat and tidy work.
- The teaching of mathematics is good in most classes. Teachers make good use of resources and, in many classes, teachers use deeply probing questions to ensure pupils' reasoning skills are developed well and regularly applied in mathematical problem-solving calculations.
- Some pupils do not make the best progress they could because some teachers' marking and feedback are not fully consistent with the school's marking policy.
- Staff ensure that pupils are prepared well for their future learning through thoroughly developing their literacy and numeracy skills and applying them in a range of subjects.

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 work well with others. They work hard and take pride in their work and their appearance. They increasingly assess their own work and do so accurately. They take pride in fulfilling their roles as school councillors, play leaders and monitors. Older pupils take care of their younger schoolmates attentively, eat with them and join in their games on the playground.
- A 'Secrets of Success' programme focuses pupils to consider the qualities of successful people. The 'secrets of success' are applied consistently across school from Nursery to Year 6 and each term the school governors award 'secrets of success' trophies in a special assembly.
- The behaviour support officer is continually available to support pupils on the playground and all pupils are aware of his presence. He organises many outdoor activities at lunchtimes and after school and pupils were keen to tell the inspector how much they appreciated the time he spends with pupils.
- A very popular breakfast club, attended by around 80 pupils each morning, gets the day off to a very positive start. Staff and governors join the multitude of pupils and relationships are strengthened. A wide range of opportunities for sports and after-school clubs also make a very positive contribution to pupils' good behaviour and their personal and physical development.
- Pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay safe inside and outside school. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the risks of using the internet, and receive specific guidance about how to keep themselves safe when using computers. Pupils and parents spoke very highly of the care shown and the enormous support from leaders and the learning mentor. All pupils can speak in a confidential way to an adult about anything which concerns them.
- Pupils rightly feel that there are few incidents of bullying and know what they would do should any occur. They are tolerant and respect the views and beliefs of others, and staff work well to promote this.
- Personal, social, health and economic education, including activities undertaken with the fire and police services, teaches pupils how to avoid the dangers of the world around them. For example, pupils are taught to be aware of the danger of strangers as well as fire safety and how to stay safe as pedestrians and cyclists.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour. Consequently, classrooms are calm and orderly. Very occasionally, a very small number of pupils are not as engaged as they could be. They are supported very well and staff do a very good job of ensuring that the learning of others in the class is not affected.
- The school has a well-deserved reputation locally for supporting pupils who have emotional and social difficulties, and in helping them to improve the management of their own behaviour.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy their school and are eager to talk about their experiences. Pupils are polite and friendly towards each other and their teachers.
- A high proportion of exclusions two years ago reduced significantly last year and there have been no exclusions this year. Pupils, staff and governors were eager to express their full commitment to a set of

eight rules which include being honest, kind and gentle, keeping safe and working hard – this is the Hightown Way.

- Pupils love coming to school and attend well. One pupil told the inspector, 'This school is amazing. The teachers are fantastic and we have so many opportunities.' Attendance rates are above average and have improved further since the last inspection. Similarly, the rate of persistent absence compares favourably with the national rate.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils currently in the school make good progress from their individual starting points and are well prepared for their secondary education.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the standard in the Year 1 check of phonics knowledge has been consistently above the national average for the past three years. The school has made the teaching of phonics a priority. The improved teaching in Year 2 is having a positive impact on reading standards at the end of key stage 1.
- Since the last inspection, the proportion of pupils in key stage 1 achieving expected standards has increased year on year in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2015, attainment in all subjects was broadly in line with the national averages. The proportion of children achieving the higher levels was below national averages but has shown a significant increase over the past three years.
- In 2015, the attainment of Year 6 pupils in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with national averages. A particular strength of this cohort was the attainment of higher-attaining pupils in mathematics, which was higher than the national average.
- Pupils' progress since key stage 1 was as expected but this does not tell the whole story. A significant number of pupils joined the school shortly before Year 6, and the progress of those who had been at the school for a longer period of time was good.
- Lower-attaining pupils achieved well due to the high-quality teaching and learning, particularly in Years 5 and 6. As a consequence of the improvements in teaching secured since the previous inspection, pupils' achievement has improved considerably.
- Outcomes for all year groups are tracked using end of year expectations. Compelling evidence for pupils' good progress is seen in the work in their books, which show good and often rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils attain as well as other pupils in the school and make good progress. Although the gap increased last year, this was seriously affected by pupils who joined the school very late in their primary school lives.
- Those who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because they receive effective, well-targeted help. Their needs are accurately identified and good support is provided.
- The impact of the good-quality teaching of grammar, accuracy of punctuation and spelling, together with good teaching in mathematics, are evident in pupils' increasingly good progress in these areas.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in almost all classes. There are some good examples of challenge in the work for these pupils. Leaders have correctly identified that higher expectations should be more consistent to ensure that the most-able pupils are encouraged to make more rapid progress in every class.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- The provision is not the same as it was last year and there are currently some shortcomings. Staff have not taken sufficient account of what the children can already do and some activities do not focus precisely on the next steps in their learning. Teaching in both classes is not sufficiently challenging for the most able. Currently, too many children flit from task to task because they are not sufficiently interested or motivated. For example, staff provide modelling clay but do not provide any stimulus or guidance so children can improve their fine-motor, creative and modelling skills.
- The leadership and management of the early years currently requires improvement. Teachers are very new to school and the organisation of this is currently changing. A new leader has been appointed but is not yet in post.
- Children are happy in Nursery and Reception classes but there are inconsistencies in their behaviour and

attitudes to learning. In Reception for example, children are familiar with well-established routines, listen attentively and respond quickly to the teachers' instructions. In Nursery, routines are not clear and children are fussy, noisy and tend to shout out.

- In 2015, from their different starting points most children made good progress through the early years. The majority of pupils start school with skills that are below those typical for their age. By the end of early years, the proportion of pupils achieving a good level of development is just above the national average. The school's current assessment information indicates that this three-year rising trend is likely to continue this year. The outcomes for disadvantaged children were better than for non-disadvantaged children in school and nationally.
- The school correctly identified that girls outperformed boys last year, particularly in writing. Teachers have made plans to tackle this issue by providing writing activities which particularly motivate boys. However, this plan is not effective enough because too few resources are consistently provided to encourage children to write independently or at length. This slows progress, especially of the most able.
- There are occasions when children follow their own interests and adults encourage their learning with open-ended questions. When this happens children persevere with the task in hand.
- Throughout the early years there are very positive relationships between children and adults. Adults encourage and quickly pick up on any child who is upset, troubled or anxious.
- Children learn in a safe environment. The indoor and outdoor areas have been developed well and have the potential to be magnets for learning. However, there are occasions when staff do not use them well enough.
- Parents value the work of the early years staff and are closely involved in their children's learning.

School details

Unique reference number	107669
Local authority	Kirklees
Inspection number	10002115

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Julie Bowdidge
Headteacher	Russell Ingleby
Telephone number	01274 335 240
Website	www.hightown.kirklees.sch.uk
Email address	office@hightown.kirklees.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Since the last inspection in December 2013, the school has undergone many changes. The previous headteacher left in December 2013. More recently, in January 2016, a new chair of governors took up post. The teacher in Nursery is newly appointed and in Years 1 and 4 temporary teachers are covering absence.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion identified for additional support with an education, health and care plan is below average.
- In 2015 the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school's website is compliant and meets the statutory requirements.
- The school provides a daily breakfast sponsored by the Huddersfield Town Foundation, and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes and some observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and looked at the work in pupils' books. They also considered pupils' behaviour around school, at playtimes and lunchtimes and asked them for their views about the school.
- Inspectors also heard a selection of readers from Year 2 and Year 6.
- An inspector joined pupils and staff in an act of collective worship and visited the breakfast club.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities.
- Discussions were held with governors and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took into account a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school development plan; governor documentation; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors looked at the 48 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, including all the written comments. They also spoke to parents at the start of the school day. Additionally they considered 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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