

Hurst Hill Primary School

Paul Street, Hurst Hill, Coseley, Bilston, West Midlands WV14 9AJ

Inspection dates

26–27 April 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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils in reading and mathematics is not yet consistent or good enough. Too few of the most-able pupils reach their full potential.
- The achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is not closing quickly enough in some classes.
- Some pupils who have special educational needs or disability do not catch up quickly enough if they fall behind in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Not all teachers ensure that pupils are offered the right level of challenge, particularly when pupils try to solve mathematics problems.
- Boys make slower progress in reading than girls. Pupils do not read often or widely enough.
- In the early years, adults do not provide enough opportunities for children to make their own choices or show independence when planning activities for the children to engage in.
- When monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, leaders do not provide clear and incisive feedback to teachers that focuses enough on improving pupils' achievement.
- There is no direct day-to-day management and oversight of early years provision to make sure that the current pace of improvement continues.

The school has the following strengths

- The most effective teaching expects a lot from pupils to help them reach their achievement targets. Pupils make good progress when this is the case.
- Leaders and teachers have started to reverse a decline in standards, particularly in writing across the school.
- Children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in phonics (letters and sounds). Standards are improving well in the early years and key stage 1.
- Pupils' personal development, well-being, safety and behaviour are good. Pupils are polite and courteous and try hard in lessons.
- Leaders and staff plan a good range of interesting topics and activities for pupils, including visits, sport and music. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to learn a modern foreign language.
- There has been a significant improvement to governance. Governors have good oversight of the school's work and progress.

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils of all abilities are offered the right level of challenge by:
 - providing more work in lessons that specifically meets the needs of the most-able pupils to help them reach higher standards in reading and mathematics
 - identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and addressing misunderstandings, especially in mathematics problem-solving work, so that teachers plan more effective ways to improve pupils' learning
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly boys, to read more widely and often
 - providing more opportunities for children in the early years to choose from a broad range of activities to help them take more responsibility and show independence.
- Make sure that leaders and teachers use assessment information better to identify where there is underachievement in order to close achievement gaps between different groups of pupils by:
 - checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils more often, so that in all classes they achieve as well as other pupils
 - providing a clear analysis for governors of how much progress is being made by disadvantaged pupils compared with others
 - checking that pupils who have special educational needs or disability are provided with the most effective interventions to help them catch up on any lost ground.
- Make sure that senior and middle leaders have a greater impact on improving teaching and raising achievement in all classes by:
 - providing more incisive feedback to staff about the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and learning
 - making sure that management and oversight of early years provision maintains the current pace of improvement and that leaders have greater influence on securing more consistently good or better teaching for the children
 - making sure that teachers and subject leaders assess and check more robustly pupils' progress and performance to identify sooner any pupils who are falling behind
 - extending opportunities for teachers to see and share best practice.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors have been determined and resolute to move the school forward during the period in which it was in special measures. They recognise that there is still work to be done to make sure that pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, in all classes make good progress. Although improving, there remain inconsistencies in pupils' achievement across classes in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders' self-evaluations are accurate and improvement plans are being used to steer the school towards sustained improvement. Nonetheless, there remain inconsistent expectations in classes where pupils' achievement requires improvement.
- Staff morale remains high. Staff and governors have worked effectively with leaders from the partner teaching school, Hales Valley (an outstanding primary school), to focus on the right priorities to raise standards and improve teaching. Leaders, governors and staff recognise that there is still more to be done to sustain improvements to teaching in all classes so that, for all pupils, standards improve further in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have managed to maintain stability during a period of disruption to staffing. The large majority of parents and carers spoken to or who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, confirm, rightly, that their children's progress is improving.
- There are clear roles and responsibilities for senior and middle leaders who have produced some well-devised action plans that help them check improvements to pupils' achievement and progress. This is reversing a decline in standards, particularly in writing.
- Leaders are tackling inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Since the previous inspection and subsequent monitoring inspections, self-evaluation has improved. Senior and middle leaders now undertake more regular and robust scrutiny of pupils' work and progress to gather evidence that supports accurate evaluations of achievement and teaching.
- Leaders provide feedback to teachers following monitoring visits to lessons but records of this feedback show that there is not enough account taken of the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. This is not helping to focus staff on the core aspects of teaching that are stalling or inhibiting pupils' learning and progress in lessons. Leaders' reports about the quality of teaching are too general and not specific about pupils' learning. For example, a teacher's effectiveness is reported in terms of strengths and weaknesses, but the weaknesses do not refer specifically to the reasons why some pupils do not make enough progress in lessons.
- Leaders' monitoring records following the scrutiny of pupils' workbooks provide clear accounts of pupils' previous work and the rate of progress being made. These records are much sharper and precise compared with records following visits to lessons when monitoring teaching.
- There are enough effective teachers across the school to influence the work of other staff so that the school has the capacity for sustained improvement. Nonetheless, teachers and support staff are not seeing enough high-quality teaching to help them improve their own practice.
- Leaders have made a good start using the new national curriculum assessments without levels to monitor pupils' progress and performance. However, the assessment information is not being used sufficiently to provide a clear analysis or reasons why achievement gaps exist between different groups and individual pupils in each class. Therefore, governors are unable to check the extent to which achievement gaps between disadvantaged pupils and others are narrowing in each class.
- The school's curriculum is well balanced and features a broad range of subjects and interesting themes and topics that stimulate pupils' interests and curiosity. Pupils' understanding and appreciation of British values is well developed. The school promotes a strong sense of 'fair play' and respect for the efforts of others. Pupils' personal development is promoted well and is fostered by the many and varied opportunities pupils have to participate in sports and the creative and performing arts. At the time of the inspection, key stage 2 pupils were celebrating the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death by studying aspects of his work and life. Year 5 pupils were observed using the language of Shakespeare during stimulating role play which improved their understanding and appreciation of complex and different forms of written and spoken English.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school's work. Pupils learn about different cultures, religions, customs and cultures and thoroughly enjoy learning to speak French as part of the school's modern foreign language programme. Special events are planned, including

educational visits to places of historical or cultural interest. Visitors, such as authors, artists and poets, are used well to promote pupils' academic and personal development.

- The primary school sports fund is used well to hire specialist coaches who work alongside class teachers. This helps the school to provide effective physical education and games lessons. Teachers and support staff benefit from this also as they see at first hand the effective teaching of physical education.
- Recognising that pupils, particularly boys, do not achieve as well as they should in reading in key stage 2, the school is, rightly, focusing on improving pupils' reading by regularly visiting the local library. Parents are very supportive of this and all pupils are members of the local library as a result. There are much-improved opportunities during guided reading lessons to focus on the work of a broader range of authors and genres. The impact of this work has yet to have full effect. Inspectors spoke to pupils and it is clear that too many pupils, especially boys, do not read often enough or widely to improve their reading skills.
- The support provided by the local authority and the teaching school has been effective. The use of expert leaders in key areas, such as the early years, has had an immediate effect on improvements. The advice and guidance offered by the teaching school and local authority advisers have pinpointed the right priorities for improvement and have provided a clarity of purpose and direction for the school's leaders, staff and governors. External support is reducing significantly because senior and middle leaders now have the confidence and skills to continue improving the school. There are plans in place to provide more opportunities for staff and leaders to see and share good practice with other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has improved significantly during the last four monitoring inspection visits while the school was in special measures. Governors now exert more influence and challenge to the school's leaders and staff. The expert leadership of the current chair of the governing body has added impetus and stability, which has been further strengthened recently with two new governor appointments. This has added further capacity for the school to sustain improvement
 - has acted on the recommendations of the previous full inspection in May 2014. An external review of the use made of pupil premium funding took place following that inspection and led to improvements to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, particularly in the early years and in key stage 1. Leaders and governors acted on these recommendations so that, overall, achievement gaps are narrowing between disadvantaged pupils and others. However, in some classes the gaps are narrowing more slowly than in other classes, reflecting inconsistencies in teaching across the school
 - has restructured and appointed more governors who bring different monitoring skills to ensure that the school improves. A thorough audit has taken place to identify key governors with the necessary skills to work on relevant committees, such as school improvement, staffing, curriculum and resources.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders, staff and governors make sure that pupils are safe in school. Policies and procedures meet statutory requirements. Designated child protection and safeguarding staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities with regard to keeping children safe in school. Record-keeping and systems for monitoring any potential risks to pupils are systematic and staff are regularly updated and trained to apply the school's safeguarding policy. The checks made on staff's suitability to work with children are appropriate and effective.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Assessment information and work in pupils' books show that the teaching is helping more pupils currently in the school to make good progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan engaging and interesting learning activities. Nonetheless, inconsistencies still exist in the challenge and expectations set by teachers. These inconsistencies reflect the outcomes from last year's national assessments where Year 6 pupils did not achieve well enough in reading and mathematics.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the previous inspection and pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. Teachers are now focusing their efforts on improving pupils' reading skills because they make slower progress in reading compared with writing. Too many boys, particularly in key stage 2, do not read fluently and with confidence. Leaders have adapted teachers' planning to address this. The renewed focus on the teaching of reading is beginning to have an impact on improving pupils' skills and confidence.
- In most lessons, teachers help pupils understand what they need to learn and how they are going to achieve this. In some lessons, however, the most-able pupils spend too much time going over old ground before moving on to more challenging tasks. The most consistent and effective teachers get on with new

learning and provide more varied and challenging extension tasks sooner so that pupils have more time to practise and correct mistakes.

- In English lessons, teachers and support staff provide good opportunities for pupils to answer questions in complete sentences, sometimes correcting them as they speak to make sure their spoken English is accurate. The most effective teaching capitalises on these discussions by providing more time for pupils to write independently and to then edit and improve their writing.
- In the early years and key stage 1, there has been sustained improvement to achievement in both reading and writing because the teaching of phonics is consistent and effective in both of these key stages.
- There are improvements to the teaching of mathematics but also some inconsistencies of expectation so that some pupils do not make enough progress. Teachers plan practical and engaging problem-solving tasks that interest pupils. These activities help pupils to apply their arithmetic skills, both in written forms and through mental calculations. Nonetheless, the most-able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently or are provided with tasks that are unclear or difficult to understand.
- The most effective teaching in mathematics lessons explains each step of a problem and allows sufficient time during lessons for pupils to think logically and learn more efficient ways of solving problems. This is not yet common practice in all classes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, particularly those with behavioural or emotional difficulties, are supported well. This improves their behaviour and attitudes to work and learning. For many of these pupils, teachers and support staff help them to cooperate and work with other pupils. There is a good balance of close support with an adult and opportunities to work independently or with other pupils.
- Assessments and plans for pupils with moderate or additional learning needs set out some well-devised interventions, but for some of these pupils the interventions do not help them make enough progress. Teachers do not always adapt tasks or work for pupils with additional needs to make sure that they make more than expected rates of progress to help them catch up with others.
- Although assessment information about pupils' learning and progress has improved since the previous full inspection, teachers do not always use these assessments to adapt or tailor work in lessons that builds on what pupils already know and can do. In some lessons, this slows progress as pupils go over too much old ground.

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 respond well to learning in lessons and the good opportunities they have for reflection in assemblies. This makes a significant contribution to their spiritual and moral development. Pupils are keen to answer questions or contribute to discussions. During a writing lesson, for example, pupils in Year 5 offered suggestions and cooperated with other pupils to help them improve their writing when devising headlines for report-writing about a tsunami.
- The school is successful in tackling any form of discrimination in a cohesive and supportive school community. Special topics, cultural and religious festivals and celebrations, and the wide range of educational visits or visitors, such as specialist advisers, tutors or artists, improve pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultural, religious and ethnic traditions that exist in the United Kingdom and beyond. These activities make a strong contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.
- Pupils are confident, mature and responsible young people who look out for each other and, as many told inspectors, it is easy to make friends and enjoy school. There are positive, warm and trusting relationships between adults and pupils and among pupils.
- There are effective systems used by staff to record concerns about an individual pupil or group. These are followed up by senior staff and teachers so that any pupil at risk of harm or who may be worried about something has an adult they know they can trust. The staff are vigilant and caring and have been trained to prevent pupils from being exposed to racist or extremist views. Pupils are respectful of each other's differences and the school successfully promotes British values of tolerance, democracy and the rule of law. Elected councillors, play leaders and librarians as well as other ambassadorial roles given to pupils enable them to make a good contribution to their school and community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous full inspection.
- Pupils cooperate well in lessons and at other times. They are kind and helpful to each other and willingly offer praise to other pupils, including those who have additional learning needs or disability. They wear their school uniform with pride and are happy to share and discuss with adults their achievements. These positive characteristics make a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- Pupils persevere and try hard in lessons, even when they are stuck with a problem or need help. They appreciate the fact that staff value their work and efforts and this is often through rewards, stickers or special praise on the classroom behaviour chart. Stimulating and well-presented displays of pupils' work adorn classrooms and corridors, reflecting how well staff value pupils' hard work and contributions. In a very small number of lessons, pupils do not sustain an activity or, if not challenged or the teaching is too mundane, will sit for extended periods of time and not extend their own learning.
- The school's indoor and outdoor environment and resources are well maintained, clean and stimulating which is appreciated and respected by pupils. During breaktimes, for example, pupils willingly offer to tidy up after eating and there is no litter or unkempt area of the school, reflecting how well pupils care for their school community.
- Leaders and staff keep robust records and monitor patterns of absence well. Staff have worked well with parents to encourage pupils to attend regularly and to come to school on time. As a result, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with the national average. The school is also using effective measures by working with families to reduce persistent absence rates which are now in line with those nationally.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Standards in the most recent national test results at key stage 2 (2015) declined compared with the previous year. Current pupils across the school are starting to make up for lost ground, but the rate at which achievement gaps between significant groups of pupils are narrowing varies. Leaders are starting to tackle this by stepping up their monitoring of lessons and pupils' work.
- Last year's national test results paint a mixed picture. At key stage 1, pupils' attainment improved on the previous year in reading, writing and mathematics and was in line with the national average. At key stage 2, standards were below average because pupils in Year 6 did not make enough progress in reading and mathematics. Work books and assessment from previous monitoring inspections show that last year's cohort in Year 6 were underachieving when the school was in special measures 23 months ago and had a lot of ground to gain by the time they started Year 6.
- For current pupils in the school, and in relation to their starting points, most are catching up on previously lost ground. There is evidence that currently in Year 6, for example, where there is consistently strong teaching, pupils are already making better progress than previously in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school's assessments show that achievement gaps are closing compared with previous years between disadvantaged pupils and others. Previous national test results show that the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally was approximately two terms in reading and mathematics and is now reducing to less than a term in most classes. In some classes, however, the achievement gap is not closing as quickly because of inconsistencies in the pace of learning and teachers' expectations.
- The most-able pupils are now doing better in some classes but not in all as they are not always reaching their full potential. Assessments show that an increasing proportion of these pupils in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 are exceeding age-related levels in writing and mathematics, although less so in reading. Although improving, boys make slower progress than girls in reading in key stage 2.
- Pupils in key stage 1 make good progress in early reading and phonics. This builds on the good-quality early phonics teaching in the early years so that pupils join Year 1 with secure foundations in early literacy.
- Across the school, work in pupils' books is usually well presented but there are inconsistencies in the quality of writing and mathematics work depending on the quality of teaching and support. Evidence from work books shows greater consistency in key stage 1 compared with classes across key stage 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make similar rates of progress as other pupils and most receive appropriate levels of support both with their classmates and when working separately as a

group or individually. Some pupils with moderate or additional learning needs do not make enough progress, as teachers and support staff are not always identifying this soon enough to adapt and change their interventions or learning programmes to meet pupils' specific needs.

- The small number of pupils in the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language make similar rates of progress as other pupils in the school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Early years provision has improved significantly since the school's previous full inspection. An increasing proportion of children achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, there is no direct day-to-day management and oversight of the early years to make sure that the current pace of improvement continues.
- The combined efforts of an expert leader from the partner teaching school and the early years leader have transformed the curriculum in both Reception classes. These improvements are having a positive effect on children's achievement in all areas of learning. There are good transition arrangements for children before they move into Year 1. All parents spoken to were pleased with the early years.
- Most children join the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age, especially in language, literacy and communication. Last year's moderated assessments show that the percentage of children reaching a good level of development was above the national average. Although the teaching and its impact on children's outcomes require improvement, this is a transformation compared with the time of the previous inspection when the school was in special measures.
- The teaching in both Reception classes is improving well. Children are provided with stimulating indoor and outdoor resources that enable them to learn and play safely and settle into school quickly. Nonetheless, the children are too dependent on adult intervention because they do not have enough opportunities to choose activities for themselves or show independence.
- Teachers and teaching assistants skilfully engage children in conversation. Questioning is focused on every child, so many gain confidence and learn to cooperate and communicate with other children. In this way, the children are learning to express themselves and ask questions. However, some children still depend on adults for direction as they have too few opportunities to make their own choices or to work independently.
- Children receive good support and guidance from adults to help them cooperate and work with other children, which makes a good contribution to the children's personal development and well-being. Children are well behaved and form positive and trusting relationships with other children and adults.
- The early years leader is making a significant contribution to improving teaching in both Reception classes but teaches for most of each week in Year 2. As a result, there is no direct day-to-day management and oversight of teaching and learning across the early years. This makes it difficult to monitor and evaluate the quality of learning or provide feedback to teachers to sustain improvement. Leadership of early years requires improvement.
- Improvements to early years provision since the recent involvement of an expert leader from the teaching school have been rapid. The external support and guidance provided by the teaching school is reducing as the school's early years teachers and school leaders take greater responsibility to secure more sustained improvement.
- Staff morale is high and both Reception classes work more cooperatively together compared with previous practice. There are also good working relationships with the adjoining pre-school provider.

School details

Unique reference number	103825
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10008254

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	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Craig
Headteacher	Caroline Dingle
Telephone number	01384 818845
Website	www.hursthillprimaryschool.com
Email address	info@hurst-hill.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14–15 May 2014

Information about this school

- Hurst Hill Primary School is a large school. It has two early years Reception classes comprising 45 children aged four and five who attend full time. The governing body manages pre-school provision for three-year-olds who attend part time and this is registered with Ofsted but is not part of this inspection and is subject to separate early years inspections.
- Most pupils, approximately nine out of ten, are White British. Other pupils come from a range of backgrounds representing minority ethnic groups. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is similar to that of most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- At the previous inspection in May 2014, the school was placed in special measures. Since then, Her Majesty's Inspector has monitored the school's progress on four occasions. At each of these four inspections the school was judged to be taking effective action towards the removal from special measures. During previous monitoring inspections, Dudley local authority has provided support which included a partnership with the executive headteacher of Hales Valley Teaching School.

Information about this inspection

- In addition to lesson observations, inspectors reviewed pupils' work and met with groups of pupils to discuss their work, behaviour and safety; inspectors asked pupils their views about the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in the playground and at other times during each of the two days of inspection.
- Inspectors spoke informally to a number of parents to seek their views about the school. Inspectors took account of 85 responses to the online Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View, and considered results of the school's own recent survey of parents.
- The inspection team held discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of teaching staff with management responsibilities. The lead inspector met the chair of the governing body and three governors. Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons about their work and progress.
- Inspectors spoke to a number of teaching staff to provide feedback on lessons observed.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan; information about pupils' achievement, progress and performance; governing body minutes; and information related to teaching, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Charalambos Loizou, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector

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