

Howes Community Primary School

Palmero Avenue, Cheylesmore, Coventry CV3 5EH

Inspection dates

24–25 May 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils' progress is variable between groups of pupils and subjects. The standards pupils reach by the end of Year 6, while improving, are much lower than average.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in mathematics and writing are not consistently good. As a result, outcomes in these subjects require improvement.
- Work in mathematics lacks challenge, particularly for the most able pupils. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Pupils do not use their grammar and punctuation skills consistently in all their writing.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve well. Wide gaps remain between the achievement of these pupils compared with that of others nationally.
- Leaders' checks on pupils' progress in writing and mathematics lack rigour. Information which tracks how well pupils, and groups of pupils, are progressing, is not used to good effect.
- Governors have not held school leaders effectively to account to ensure that pupils do well. They have not ensured that leaders make good use of the pupil premium to support disadvantaged pupils.
- Children in the early years, especially boys, do not make rapid enough progress to ensure that they are ready to tackle the Year 1 curriculum.
- Attendance, while improving, is below average.
- Although many pupils behave well, the poor attitudes to learning of some pupils shows in their untidy presentation of work in their books. As a result, behaviour requires improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders have made a number of improvements since the last inspection, including support for pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including pupils with hearing impairment, are well provided for and achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. The teaching of early reading is particularly effective.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use their secure subject knowledge to question pupils effectively in lessons.
- Relationships are strong between pupils and staff. This helps to ensure that pupils are safe and feel safe at all times of the school day.
- The school's work in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils, especially the most able and those who are disadvantaged, make good progress by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations for all pupils and are clear about what pupils already know and can do
 - setting suitably challenging work in mathematics and then moving pupils on to harder work more quickly when they are ready
 - checking that pupils use their grammar and punctuation skills consistently in all their writing
 - insisting that pupils present their work to the best of their ability and show good attitudes to learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - senior leaders use current systems to track pupils' progress more efficiently and effectively to check that groups of pupils are making sufficient progress
 - governors receive information about the achievement of groups of pupils in order to challenge the effectiveness of the school's work, especially the impact of pupil premium funding on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils
 - leaders are more rigorous in their checks on how well pupils are progressing in their writing and mathematics.
- Improve teaching and children's outcomes in the early years by:
 - using information about what children already know and can do to set more challenging work for all children
 - setting tasks which motivate and encourage boys to write more frequently.
- Improve attendance by:
 - checking and following up any unauthorised absence rigorously
 - using absence information to inform leaders which strategies will be used to work with each family.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- Since 2013, senior leaders have worked to ensure that staffing is more stable and that members of the leadership team have clear roles and responsibilities. As a result, some improvements have been made since the last inspection. However, leaders are yet to ensure that the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes are good across the school and attendance also remains too low. Consequently, leadership and management requires improvement.
- Leaders' work to check that pupils are making sufficient gains in their learning in writing and mathematics lacks rigour. Although leaders gather plenty of information which tracks how well pupils are progressing, they do not use this information efficiently or effectively. This means that leaders are not able quickly to draw out any variances in the progress of particular groups of pupils in order to check whether their progress is good enough. As a result, leaders are not fully clear about what they need to do to ensure that rates of progress improve.
- As a result of not using achievement information well, teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils can and cannot do. This leads to teachers not challenging pupils as well as they could, particularly in writing and mathematics work.
- Currently, work with families to improve pupils' attendance is not evaluated or followed up thoroughly. This means that leaders do not use information about pupils' absence to ensure that future strategies are effective. Consequently, attendance rates remain lower than they should be.
- The headteacher has established clear systems which help senior leaders and governors to gain a good understanding of the performance of teachers. Termly meetings to review how well pupils are progressing include all relevant teaching and support staff. Currently, these systems do not focus enough on whether different groups of pupils in different year groups are achieving well. This means that teachers are sometimes not clear about how to meet the needs of different pupil groups or how to improve their teaching practice.
- Leaders are not making effective use of the pupil premium funding. Although disadvantaged pupils are now starting to make better progress, they are not doing well enough to enable them to make the gains they need in order to attain their end-of-year expectations or to catch up with other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have benefited from external school improvement support, including that provided by the local authority. As a result of this support, pupils are making better rates of progress than in previous years. Leaders recognise that more work is needed to ensure that progress is consistently good.
- Leaders demonstrate strong ambition for the pupils at Howes. The curriculum is designed and implemented so that pupils are encouraged to apply their skills in a range of situations. A good illustration of this is the 'Be Enterprising Succeed Together' (BEST) project. Pupils have visited and worked with children from other countries on particular projects. Howes welcomes pupils from other countries. This effectively supports their understanding of British values.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the specific needs of those pupils who join part-way through the primary phase, such as those who arrive at an early stage of learning to speak English. The inclusion team's work with pupils and their families ensures that clear action plans and strategies are established and implemented. These are well matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Their actions are reviewed regularly to check whether pupils are making the desired progress in their language development. As a result, pupils with early language needs achieve well.
- Leaders recognise that increasingly there are more pupils from minority ethnic groups joining the school. They ensure that all pupils benefit from learning about the different cultures represented, such as by encouraging parents to cook with pupils to showcase traditional dishes. Pupils enjoy learning about different languages; assemblies are used well to explain the nature of the languages. This provision supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.
- Leaders ensure that the work of the hearing impaired unit is good and is an integral part of the day-to-day work in the school. Leaders carefully plan provision so that pupils benefit from both specific teaching in the unit and pinpoint when it is more beneficial for pupils to work with their peers in classrooms. As a result, this group make good progress. Other pupils benefit by developing an understanding of other pupils' needs and how best they can support them.
- Leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is effective. This is because specific barriers to learning are identified and the right support is then planned and implemented. Staff are skilled in asking questions to motivate them to want to learn more.

- School leaders make effective use of the primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding. In order to support the improvement in the teaching of PE, leaders have employed a sports coach. Staff are now more competent and confident in their teaching and, as a result, pupils benefit from improved teaching and enjoy lessons more. More clubs have been introduced, including for tennis, and pupils say that they appreciate the wider range of opportunities they are given to play sport.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors are well aware of the weaker past outcomes of pupils overall. However, they do not request or receive information about the progress of different pupil groups, including those who are disadvantaged or most-able. Despite now having a better understanding of pupils' achievement overall, they know that they now need to dig deeper to better understand how well different groups are performing in order to hold leaders more effectively to account. Governors are not confident that the pupil premium funding is used as effectively as it could be.
 - Governors work with established processes which support them in monitoring the performance of the headteacher and teachers. They have yet to ensure that leaders have established consistently good teaching in the school in writing and mathematics.
 - Minutes of governing body meetings show that over the past year, governors have asked more questions of senior leaders in order to check out school performance. This has led to improvements, for example in the school's work to support pupils' early language development.
 - Members of the governing body have a wide range of skills. The co-chairs use these to link members with aspects of the school's work. For example, a governor with safeguarding experience visits the school at least every term to check whether pupils are kept safe as a result of effective processes. This work is fed back to all governors at termly board meetings.
 - Governors recognise what needs to be done to improve the school and are already taking steps to ensure that senior leaders are held to account more effectively. An external review of governance, therefore, is not recommended.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All relevant policies are up to date. Staff understand their responsibilities. All staff are checked to ensure that they are suitable to carry out their roles and have completed the required safeguarding training. They use this training to check that they know what to look for with regard to pupils' welfare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement

- Teaching across the school does not ensure that pupils make good progress in writing and mathematics. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged and the most able pupils. Pupils' books show that pupils are not making the gains they need in order to reach or exceed national expectations by the end of early years, Year 2 or Year 6.
- Teachers set too much work which pupils find easy, particularly in mathematics. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are sometimes too low. Teachers do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils can and cannot do. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, spend too little time working on activities which challenge them effectively. They are not moved on to harder work quickly enough. This means that pupils do not show their teachers where their difficulties lie and so teachers are unable to plan subsequent tasks which will provide sufficient challenge.
- Pupils' progress in writing is starting to speed up and, as a result, their skills are steadily improving. Pupils are now given more opportunities to write longer pieces and are motivated by the work they are given. Nevertheless, boys in the early years still do not write regularly enough. Despite improvements to writing across the year groups, pupils do not embed their newly acquired grammatical and punctuation skills in all their subsequent writing. Sometimes, teachers do not check carefully enough that pupils do this. Pupils' work is sometimes praised for excellent punctuation where improvement is needed.
- Teachers and teaching assistants demonstrate good subject knowledge in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are expected to explain their opinions or their strategies in working things out. Staff skilfully engage and motivate the pupils, such as by asking why they thought they would find creatures in certain places when exploring minibeasts in their outdoor environment. Pupils were encouraged to test out their theories by digging in the ground or moving objects.
- Adults foster caring relationships, and these are seen at all times. Pupils value each other's company and show this by listening to each other's views and responding sensitively. Pupils trust adults in the school. Teachers motivate pupils to contribute to discussions, and as a result, there are very few instances of

disruptive behaviour.

- The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, including those with hearing impairment, is effective. The inclusion team works well together and ensures that staff deployment is well thought through. Pupils receive the support they need at different times of the day, either working alongside their peers or in specifically targeted work in small groups.
- Reading is taught well in all year groups. The school's inclusion team keeps teachers well informed about individual pupils' needs and uses this information to teach specific reading skills well. This is particularly the case for pupils who are new to speaking English.
- Newsletters make homework expectations clear for parents. The school supports families by providing a before-school homework club each Friday. This club is well attended by pupils. Leaders ensure that families from all backgrounds are encouraged to engage with the school. Workshops, including those on guidance for learning in the home and support for understanding how pupils are taught, such as mathematical calculation procedures, are welcomed by parents. As a result, pupils complete homework more regularly.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This aspect of the school's work has improved since the last inspection.
- Leaders have ensured that the work with families is more effective by listening to parents and responding with appropriate guidance and support. Various parental workshops help to address any concerns expressed by parents and help them to understand how they can better support their children's learning at home.
- Staff quickly pick up on any barriers to learning. They work with pupils, their parents and teachers to decide on the best strategies to help pupils. The impact of their actions are evaluated in a timely fashion to check that this work is yielding good outcomes. This support is of particular benefit to pupils who have hearing impairment, those who have special educational needs or disability, and those who speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils with hearing impairment are very well included in the school's day-to-day work. In an assembly, for example, pupils were supported to become involved, with adults and many pupils signing throughout. This underlines the school's inclusive ethos.
- School leaders and governors recognise the importance of children's welfare. All staff understand and apply up-to-date policies and processes, including those relating to child protection.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare, and that when it does occur, they know whom to talk to. Staff deal with any incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They value the support they receive from school about issues such as online safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding about different cultures and faiths. They talk about and demonstrate their understanding of tolerance and respect by showing caring attitudes in their work and play. As a result, discrimination does not occur. This means that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are proud of their school and feel safe. They know how their lessons help them learn about difference. They value their relationships with their friends and with all staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Leaders and governors are aware that attendance is too low and are determined to improve it. Although the school's work has had some success this year, current attendance remains stubbornly low and continues to impact on pupils' achievement. Staff do not evaluate thoroughly the impact of their strategies designed to improve attendance or check and follow up unauthorised absences with enough rigour. This means that their efforts are not always effective.
- Pupils' presentation in their books is sometimes untidy and shows poor attitudes towards their learning. In some pupils' writing books, for example, handwriting is not as neat as that seen previously. This is despite specific targets agreed between the pupil and the teacher to maintain such standards.
- Pupils behave well both in lessons and around school. They conduct themselves appropriately, responding to the well-organised learning environments. Pupils move around the school safely and use

play equipment sensibly.

- The implementation of an improved curriculum means that pupils are now more confident in their learning. They understand the purpose of their learning. Teachers explain this to them well. Pupils voice their own opinions readily and are prepared to discuss the points of view of others. In a Year 6 English lesson, for example, pupils knew that their work to better understand the reasons for the Artful Dodger's actions in 'Oliver Twist' supported them in preparing for their end-of-year production.
- Pupils collaborate well with each other and with adults. In the early years, children learn about, and practise, social skills. Pupils develop these as they move through the different year groups. These skills enable pupils to learn about tolerance and respect. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported.
- Break- and lunchtimes are well supervised by staff. There is a high number of staff on duty who engage well with the pupils. Parents and staff express positive views about pupils' behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils' progress varies between subjects and groups of pupils. Children in the early years do not make sufficiently rapid progress to ensure that they are as well prepared as they can be for learning in Year 1. Between Years 1 and 6, pupils do not achieve well in writing and mathematics. The achievement of the most able pupils and disadvantaged pupils in particular requires improvement.
- In 2015, the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations at the end of Year 2 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents expected progress from pupils' previously lower starting points. In Year 6 in 2015, standards were much better than in 2014. Even so, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 still fell below the government's minimum standard.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils requires improvement. The gaps between disadvantaged pupils' attainment and that of others in the school and nationally widened at key stage 2 in 2015. These gaps were particularly wide in writing and mathematics. School information and inspection evidence show that across the school, disadvantaged pupils are starting to make better progress. The gaps in attainment in Year 6 this year are narrower. Even so, the progress that disadvantaged pupils make across the year groups is still not sufficiently rapid to enable them to catch up quickly. Leaders do not ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to good effect.
- The most able pupils make variable progress. Tasks set in mathematics do not build well on what pupils already know and can do to challenge pupils to reach their potential. In writing, pupils do not use newly acquired grammatical and punctuation skills consistently well. As a result, they do not convey their ideas as effectively as they could. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in Year 6 in 2015 was lower than the national average, especially in spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. This is because they receive good-quality support from the school's inclusion team, including those who work in the hearing impaired unit. Staff check regularly how well pupils are progressing and make changes to programmes of support as required.
- School achievement information and inspection evidence show that current rates of progress across the school are better than previously and standards are continuing to rise as a result. In reading, for example, pupils are doing well. Phonics is taught well. The proportion of pupils on track to achieve the expected standard in phonics by the end of Year 2 is similar to the national average. This, coupled with the effective provision for pupils with language needs, including those who speak English as an additional language, leads to good progress throughout the school.

Early years provision

requires improvement

- Leadership of the early years has not ensured that teaching, assessment and outcomes are good. Although children make the levels of progress expected from their varying starting points, too few do better than this.
- Many children enter Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that are lower than expected, especially in their language skills. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception has been lower than the national average for the past two years. As a result, some

children, particularly boys, are not sufficiently prepared for learning in Year 1.

- Although the information collected from assessing children's skills and knowledge in the various areas of learning is accurate, staff do not use this information to good effect. The tasks that are set lack the challenge needed for children of varying abilities to make rapid progress.
- Leaders and staff are aware that boys typically require more support in their early writing than girls. They have revised the curriculum to ensure that boys are more interested in the topics taught. Despite this, opportunities are still missed to motivate and encourage boys to write more regularly and to check on the progress they are making.
- Many aspects of the curriculum are well planned. All staff know their roles in either teaching groups or observing children in their chosen activities. The indoor and outdoor learning environments are well designed and maintained. As a result, children enjoy their learning and play and are keen to work with their classmates and staff.
- All adults engage well with the children, using effective questioning to motivate the children in their own investigative learning. Adults have a good understanding of the early years curriculum. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well supported.
- Children show interest in their work by sticking at tasks for long periods of time. Their positive attitudes contribute well to the good behaviour evident in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children understand the reasons for rules, such as taking turns, and as a result they stay safe. Adults ensure that classrooms are safe, welcoming and attractive, so that children are happy and secure.
- The school engages well with external agencies, which provide additional support to children in their early development. For example, successful partnerships with staff of the local children's centre help school staff to gain an early understanding of children's needs before they start school.
- Parents are supportive of the school's work. They work well with staff at the start of Nursery and Reception and effective partnerships continue throughout the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	134426
Local authority	Coventry
Inspection number	10012420

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Roberts and Kshama Shore
Headteacher	Sioux Cooke
Telephone number	024 7641 1711
Website	www.howesprimary.co.uk
Email address	admin@howes.coventry.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 June 2014

Information about this school

- Howes Community Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one part-time Nursery class and one full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is rising and is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is rising and is well above average. Some pupils join the school part-way through their primary education speaking little or no English.
- Approximately half of the pupils are of White British heritage, with Indian and Bangladeshi pupils making up the largest other groups.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is similar to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above the national average.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils who have special educational needs, in the form of a hearing impaired unit for 10 pupils within the school. These pupils are supported through the use of British Sign Language (BSL), hearing aids linked to sound fields and other amplification technology and spoken language specialists.
- The school does not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 12 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, a co-chair of the governing body and other governors, staff and a local authority adviser.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their reading and listened to them read.
- Inspectors examined work in pupils' books and observed an assembly.
- The school's child protection and safeguarding procedures were scrutinised.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at a range of documentation written to support school improvement, including minutes from meetings of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 replies to Ofsted's online Parent View questionnaire. Inspectors took account of parental and pupil surveys conducted by the school and also spoke with parents.

Inspection team

Jeremy Bird, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Hinton	Ofsted Inspector

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