

# Helsby Hillside Primary School

Bates Lane, Helsby, Frodsham, Cheshire WA6 9LN

## Inspection dates

4–5 October 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher and his team provide a school environment that is warm and welcoming and which pupils regard as a safe place.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and school leaders provide for their personal development highly effectively.
- Senior leaders ensure that the quality of teaching is good. Pupils experience a wide and interesting curriculum that promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- Most children make rapid progress from their starting points across a wide range of subjects.
- Parents are very positive about the school. They appreciate the good communication they receive and the variety of extra-curricular activities on offer.
- Children in Reception Year make a good start to school life and the majority are well equipped for Year 1 by the end of their time there.
- Governors know the school well and are united with senior leaders in their ambition to strive for ever higher standards.
- Most-able pupils attain well but their progress is not as strong from their starting points as other groups.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics do not focus their plans on pupils' outcomes enough and do not evaluate the impact of actions they have taken.

## Full report

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

- Accelerate the progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, by ensuring that teachers consistently provide activities that stretch their abilities and deepen their learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics:
  - focus their action plans firmly on outcomes for pupils
  - evaluate the impact of actions they have taken to achieve those outcomes.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher and his staff have created a learning environment that parents quite rightly describe as 'happy and secure'. Parents feel that the school works in a strong partnership with them and the vast majority of those who completed 'Parent View', the online inspection survey, were very positive about all aspects of the education their children receive.
- Senior leaders are ambitious for pupils' achievement. They have a good overview of the strengths of the school and always strive to make improvements. For example, after analysing the outcomes for 2016, they are currently providing extra activities for the most able pupils, so that more of them reach the higher standard in reading by the end of Year 6.
- Because of good leadership, current pupils are making strong progress overall. Previous published achievement figures in English and mathematics show that attainment has been high over time, and that progress is rapid for pupils from most, but not all, starting points.
- The school's development plan for key subjects is firmly focused on aiming for high standards for pupils, so that they have the basic skills they need when they move into the next phase of their education. Senior leaders evaluate the impact of actions they have taken to secure such outcomes effectively.
- Leaders of subjects other than English and mathematics have a generally good overview of their subjects. Their action plans, however, are less well focused on outcomes for pupils than those for English and mathematics. They do not evaluate the impact of the actions that have been taken.
- Senior leaders have put effective systems in place for checking the performance of teachers. There is a planned programme for monitoring teaching and learning. Based on this, leaders identify strengths and areas for development. They provide effective training to support teachers, so that good teaching is sustained and constantly strengthened. Leaders also ensure that teachers are held accountable for their pupils' achievement.
- Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value highly the continuing professional development they receive. They are proud to work in the school. They feel it is a safe place for pupils and say it is well led and managed.
- Support from the local authority has been justifiably 'light touch', given the overall high attainment that the school has achieved over time. Nevertheless, advisers regularly challenge the school to aim ever higher and are aware of areas for development, such as the need to strengthen the progress of the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whole-school projects, such as 'The Sea of Dreams', are used to give pupils opportunities to use their basic skills across the curriculum to good effect. Workshops about Passover, visits to the Houses of Parliament and links with the local church are just a few examples of activities that contribute to the promotion of fundamental British values and the development of pupils who will have a positive contribution to make to society in later life.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively, removing barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, to ensure that they can participate in all the activities the school provides. The funding is used to support pupils' academic, emotional and social development.
- The school makes effective use of the sports premium. Staff are developing their skills well in the teaching of physical education and pupils are keen to take part in the large number of sports competitions and extra-curricular activities that are on offer, such as football, netball and cross-country running.
- A few items of information were missing from the school's website. School leaders are now aware of this and have made the necessary corrections.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have a good overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. They show ambition and tenacity in wanting the very best for the pupils in the school.
- Governors have a range of relevant skills and backgrounds, which enable them to provide stringent challenge and strong support to the headteacher and his leadership team.
- Governors have a good knowledge of the requirements of safeguarding and are suitably and regularly trained.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are regularly trained and updated on procedures and are vigilant. Appropriate records are kept of incidents and referrals are made promptly. Risk assessments are thorough and effective.

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

**Good**

- Most lessons are planned well and teachers provide work that is designed to challenge pupils, regardless of their level of ability. In mathematics, for example, there are regular opportunities to solve problems and use reasoning skills.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, can often be seen working with concentration and a good degree of enthusiasm on activities designed to stretch them. However, the level of challenge provided is variable, with some work lengthening their tasks rather than deepening their thinking.
- Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and, in the vast majority of cases, pupils have excellent attitudes to their learning. Most pupils take pride in their work and presentation is typically good.
- Occasionally, some pupils lose concentration and become distracted from their work because the task they have been given does not sustain their focus. When this happens, adults are usually effective at intervening and redirecting them to their work.
- Teachers have warm and positive relationships with their pupils. They create welcoming and purposeful classroom environments. Displays both support pupils' learning and celebrate good work, thus helping to develop their skills and self-esteem.
- Teachers organise the work of their teaching assistants effectively, especially to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, these

pupils make good progress from their starting points.

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach and they have generally good questioning skills. They are often effective in asking pupils questions that enable them to apply their reasoning skills or check for accuracy.
- Teachers use assessment well. They regularly make sure that pupils understand what they are learning and, where they identify a misconception, they adjust their teaching accordingly.
- The school's marking and feedback policy is effective and teachers apply it consistently. Pupils are given time to respond and they have a clear understanding of the next steps in their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. They understand the different types of bullying that exist, including cyber bullying, and say that incidents are very rare. They know whom to speak to if they have any concerns and are confident that staff will deal with issues promptly and effectively.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe online. They understand the risks associated with the internet and benefit from regular e-safety advice provided by staff. They know what action they would take if they were to see inappropriate content on the internet.
- Pupils gain a strong sense of responsibility through a variety of roles in school. School councillors bring about changes to aspects of school life, such as the provision of sheltered seating areas in the playground. There is a 'buddy' system, where older pupils are paired with younger ones to support and help them. Peer counsellors have been appointed to resolve playground disputes before there is a need to ask an adult to intervene.
- Pupils experience excellent opportunities that help them to develop into thoughtful citizens of tomorrow, with a good understanding of the country they live in. Visits to the Houses of Parliament, for example, give them a deeper understanding of democratic processes.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils show a high degree of confidence and are more than willing to approach adults, greeting them and talking to them appropriately.
- Pupils typically show excellent conduct in lessons and when moving into and out of the classroom or the assembly hall. They have a high level of respect for each other and for adults in the school.
- Pupils' conduct at breaktimes and lunchtimes is exemplary. They show excellent manners towards adults and they have consideration for other pupils around them. They play well together in the playground and look after each other.
- Pupils understand the value of their education and how it has a bearing on their aspirations, such as studying at university or college or getting a job. They enjoy

coming to school, as is reflected in high attendance figures.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Published attainment information for key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been higher than national averages over time. A very high percentage of pupils in Year 1 typically reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check, with all pupils reaching or exceeding the threshold in 2015. In 2016, unconfirmed data shows that 96% of pupils in Year 1 reached the expected standard in phonics.
- Provisional figures for the most recent assessments in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 indicate good attainment and progress from pupils' starting points, with percentages that are higher than national averages. In key stage 2, the picture for attainment is similar. Progress measures indicate that there has been at least sufficient or better progress.
- From most starting points, pupils make rapid progress in English and mathematics across the school. In Year 2, for example, writing progresses from short sentences using simple vocabulary to writing extended pieces with more sophisticated language. However, the school's own assessment information for 2016 shows that the percentages of pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 achieving the expected standard in writing were substantially below other figures.
- Previous attainment information for most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, shows that they have regularly achieved high standards. Given their high starting points, however, this typically represents no more than expected progress when compared to national averages. This is because of some inconsistency in the level of challenge provided to most-able pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in a wide range of other subjects across the school. In science, for example, they carry out carefully planned investigations into how cress seeds grow and use their writing skills to produce reports about their findings.
- Pupils read well and make effective use of their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. They mostly read with an appropriate degree of fluency and have good comprehension and inference skills. They enjoy reading for pleasure, although a small number of pupils do not read a wide variety of books, tending to keep to the types of books they prefer.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Their needs are effectively monitored and plans are put in place that ensure they are given the support they need to develop well. School leaders use pupil premium funding effectively in this connection.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Children entering the Reception Year have skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. As a result of good teaching, by the time they leave, the large majority are ready for Year 1. The percentage achieving a good level of development in recent years has been above national averages. Current children are making good progress from their starting points.
- The small number of disadvantaged children and those who have special educational

needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because leaders make good use of funding, including the early years pupil premium, to provide carefully targeted support.

- The early years leader has a clear view of strengths and areas for development. She analyses assessment information to identify focuses for improvement and plans actions to address them. For example, there is emphasis in the current year on strengthening understanding of number for the most able children and on diminishing the difference in performance between boys and girls by developing more 'boy-friendly' activities.
- The environment for the children is supportive of learning and well organised. There are opportunities to develop skills in writing and mathematics in various parts of the setting. In the role-play area, for example, some children were enthusiastically writing shopping lists. In the outdoor area, some boys showed good cooperation and reasoning skills as they worked together to put numbers on a number line in the correct order.
- Children's behaviour is excellent and their attitudes to learning are positive. They show good concentration as they work in the mud kitchen, for example, where they use mathematical language, such as 'more' and 'less', well. Relationships between children are cooperative and friendly.
- Safeguarding is effective in the early years and there are no breaches of welfare requirements. Staff are well trained and understand how to keep children safe. Children show they feel safe through their attitudes and behaviour and are confident enough to speak to inspectors without prompting, for example.
- The links between parents and the school are strong. School leaders provide opportunities for parents to contribute to the initial assessment of their children's abilities through home visits. Early years staff maintain close communication with parents throughout their children's time in Reception.
- Staff successfully provide interesting and enjoyable activities that move children's learning forward, and they usually ask pertinent questions of children to support this. However, for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, there is a too-variable use of challenging questioning to deepen their thinking and enable them to make more rapid progress.

## School details

Unique reference number	111004
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10002924

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Morley
Headteacher	Craig Richardson
Telephone number	01928 722 991
Website	<a href="http://www.helsbyhillside.co.uk/">www.helsbyhillside.co.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@hillside.cheshire.sch.uk">admin@hillside.cheshire.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	28–29 September 2011

## Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about some aspects of curricular provision for the current academic year. It also does not meet the publication requirements on the effectiveness of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. School leaders have taken steps to address these matters.
- Helsby Hillside Primary School is smaller than average in size.
- The percentages of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language are well below the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils who receive support in school for their special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have education, health and care plans is also below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through pupil premium funding is well below the national average.



- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors carried out observations of learning in all year groups. Three of these were joint observations between the headteacher and the lead inspector. The headteacher was also present at inspector team meetings.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation summary, action plans for school improvement, records of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, performance management documents, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's own assessment records, behaviour logs and records connected with the safeguarding of children.
- Inspectors had discussions with various stakeholders, including members of staff, governors, a representative from the local authority, parents and pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed pupils' writing and mathematics, as well as their work in other subjects. They also looked at the work of children in the early years.
- Inspectors also evaluated 40 responses received through 'Parent View' (the online survey), 41 responses received through the online pupil survey and 17 responses received through the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Mark Quinn, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Julie Downing	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Howard	Ofsted Inspector

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