

Hallam Fields Junior School

Longfield Lane, Ilkeston, Derbyshire DE7 4DB

Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The school is well led and managed. Leaders have successfully implemented new whole-school strategies, which are rapidly securing improvements in the progress of current pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The governing body has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. Governors support and challenge leaders in equal measures.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Relationships in school are good. The school promotes pupils' welfare very well.
- Pupils develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within a safe and highly nurturing environment. Therefore, pupils are happy, confident and have a mature level of respect and empathy for others.
- The majority of pupils behave very well. Leaders provide effective support for the few pupils who need help to improve their behaviour. However, leaders recognise that some parents have concerns about behaviour at the school.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils, although improving, does not consistently meet the progress of other pupils nationally in all subjects.
- Teachers use assessment information about pupils to plan learning that is appropriate for most pupils' needs. However, some teachers do not check pupils' understanding well enough in lessons. Therefore, pupils' misconceptions are not always followed up and pupils who grasp new learning quickly are not moved on to deepen their knowledge.
- Some lower ability pupils struggle with their basic reading skills, while others are not sufficiently challenged.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment further by ensuring that pupils' understanding is systematically checked during lessons, so that any misconceptions are promptly addressed and pupils' learning can be moved on quickly.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by ensuring that:
 - disadvantaged pupils' progress continues to improve in line with national expectations, and more disadvantaged pupils reach the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6
 - lower ability pupils' reading is checked regularly, so that their reading books provide appropriate challenge and they can be given additional support when needed.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders' good work to support pupils' positive behaviour is better communicated to parents.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The school is ably led by the headteacher. The appointment of two assistant headteachers in the last few years has further strengthened leadership capacity. Senior leaders know the school extremely well. Therefore, they have an accurate understanding of where improvements are needed. This has enabled them to put in place an appropriate action plan to bring about rapid improvement in pupils' reading and mathematical skills. The school's current assessment information, and evidence seen during the inspection, demonstrate that current pupils' progress across all year groups is improving.
- There have been lots of staff changes since the last inspection. Leaders have been successful in ensuring that the quality of teaching remains consistently good across the school. Leaders have achieved this by making their high expectations clear and providing high-quality support and professional development for all staff.
- Leaders have ensured that the school's motto, 'growing together, learning together, achieving together', is reflected in the culture and ethos they have created at the school. All staff share leaders' determination to continually drive forward the improvements that have been introduced.
- The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to gain experiences that broaden their horizons through interesting topics and special curriculum focus days. All pupils study French and benefit from the well-resourced ICT suite. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are reinforced across different subjects. They enjoy a range of artistic, sporting and academic activities, which increases their enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning. Leaders arrange for local artists to come into school and work with pupils to create large works of art. These sculptures and mosaics are displayed prominently around the school and enhance the learning environment for pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a key priority and is interwoven into all aspects of school life. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures different from their own through trips, visits and assemblies. Consequently, pupils have a mature level of respect and empathy for others and are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils have plenty of meaningful opportunities to apply and understand fundamental British values. For example, one Year 4 pupil explained how they had acted out an incident with police and suspects. This had helped him to have a better understanding of the consequences of actions within the law.
- Senior leaders promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well. The achievement of different groups of pupils is checked regularly, and targeted support is provided to diminish differences in pupils' progress. The pupil premium funding is used and monitored to support disadvantaged pupils with their mathematical and literacy skills. Leaders rightly acknowledge that the progress of disadvantaged pupils remains a whole-school priority to ensure that it consistently meets national expectations.
- Leaders use the primary school physical education and sport premium funding effectively to make a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being.

Pupils are keen competitors who love to take part in local competitions. Almost all pupils participate regularly in sporting opportunities. Pupils also appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular clubs provided for them.

- Leaders ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive high levels of care and support. Leaders take effective action to ensure that any barriers to learning are addressed swiftly and pupils are not held back in any way. As a result, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress.
- The majority of parents would recommend the school to others. The headteacher and staff are held in high regard. Both parents and pupils comment on how approachable and accessible senior leaders and teachers are. The home-school journals encourage regular dialogue between parents and the school. Leaders also run events for parents to help them support their children's learning at home.
- A few parents, who responded to the Ofsted free text service, expressed concerns about the behaviour of some pupils at the school. Leaders have planned future events to explain the school's new behaviour strategies to parents.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed to continued improvement. Governors provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support to leaders; they are regular visitors to school. They celebrate the strengths of the school and know what the school needs to do to improve.
- Governors manage the school budget carefully. They ensure that funds are used effectively to support disadvantaged pupils, as well as improve the quality of provision for sport and physical education. They acknowledge that the progress of disadvantaged pupils has been variable but is improving, and that more disadvantaged pupils need to reach the higher standards in all subjects at the end of key stage 2.
- Governors access training regularly to help them fulfil their responsibilities with rigour. For example, they have recently received training in helping to keep pupils safe from radicalisation and extremism.
- Systems for managing the performance of staff, including the headteacher, are rigorous. Governors check that targets have been met and that self-evaluation, school development planning and objectives for staff are linked to ensure that they result in further improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory requirements are met. Senior leaders and governors have established a culture of high vigilance. All staff receive regular training to enable them to be rigorous in their safeguarding duties. Records of any concern about pupils are meticulous because leaders know that keeping pupils safe is of central importance. Leaders provide effective early help to pupils and their families to prevent problems from

escalating. Leaders liaise effectively with external agencies to ensure that action is taken promptly when any concerns are raised.

- Leaders and the governing body complete annual audits to check that safeguarding arrangements continue to be robust.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations for what pupils can achieve. Teachers and pupils have positive relationships, and pupils willingly follow teacher's instructions in lessons. Teachers plan lessons which hold pupils' interest and capture their imagination. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and make good progress.
- Leaders rightly identified mathematics as a whole-school priority, and have taken effective action to address this. All staff have had training on the new mathematics curriculum. Pupils have lots of well-planned and meaningful opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge and practise their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Their resilience and confidence has grown as a result. The most able pupils are given appropriate challenge to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. For example, Year 3 pupils moved on from using simple place value to solving complex problems using division. The most able disadvantaged pupils have been given additional support in mathematics. School records show that they have made accelerated progress as a result.
- Teachers have secure subject knowledge, particularly in grammar, and this is helping pupils to make good progress in their writing across the school. Pupils' books show that they write regularly in lots of different styles, using appropriate grammatical features and a wide range of vocabulary. Pupils further develop their writing skills through topic work. For example, Year 5 pupils learned about water cycles in geography and then successfully wrote an explanation text. Pupils' attainment and progress in writing have improved significantly over the last few years.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, when looking at different texts, teachers encourage pupils to explore different meanings through methods such as visualisation and inference.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' reading has been highly successful. Pupils enjoy reading for pleasure and to find information to help them with their work. Leaders have ensured that there are lots of inviting displays informing pupils about new books and authors, in addition to a well-resourced library. A display in the school reception entitled, 'our dads take reading very seriously at this school', shows photographs of pupils' dads reading in unusual places. Pupils who spoke with inspectors could all name their favourite book and said they enjoyed reading and recommending books to their friends. Leaders have recently introduced rewards for pupils who read at least five times a week. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in pupils' uptake in reading. Inspectors saw pupils thoroughly enjoying World Book Day, dressed as their favourite characters, engrossed in activities which celebrated the love of reading.
- Some lower-ability pupils struggle to apply phonics skills when reading independently. Other pupils have books that are too easy for them, therefore they are not challenged and do not make sufficient progress.

- Classrooms are attractive; displays celebrate pupils' work and provide them with helpful prompts and examples of how to make their work better. Pupils also benefit from outdoor learning experiences through the school's work as a Forest School.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and deployed. They work closely with class teachers and, as a result, have a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Pupils receive regular homework, which helps to improve their basic skills. Pupils are also encouraged to complete topic homework in a format of their choice. This helps them to apply their skills independently and so extend their learning.
- Occasionally, teachers do not always identify pupils' misconceptions in lessons or recognise when pupils have grasped new learning quickly, and therefore could be moved on to greater challenge. As a result, pupils' progress is sometimes hampered.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum develops each pupil academically, emotionally and socially. Pupils are welcoming and confident when speaking to adults. When asked, pupils can explain what they are learning because adults make the purpose of learning clear to pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Values, such as respect, friendship and equality, are reinforced regularly in lessons and assemblies. As a result, pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong. They know they should treat others as they wish to be treated themselves, and they have a mature level of respect and empathy for others. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example on the school council, as volunteers and as eco warriors. Pupils also write for the local newspaper and have links with Gambia, where the school sponsors a child. This is helping pupils to understand how to be good citizens and preparing them well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations, including when using the internet. Pupils who spoke with inspectors said that, although there is occasional name calling from a minority of pupils, any bullying is very rare. Pupils have complete confidence in their teachers to deal with any concerns.
- The school provides good care and support for vulnerable pupils, for example through the nurture group and using the school's sensory room. Leaders ensure that this support is personalised for each pupil, and carefully monitor the impact that it has on pupils' well-being. The headteacher is passionate about providing an inclusive learning environment and supporting pupils to remove any barriers to their learning.
- Pupils are taught effectively about healthy eating. They enjoy maintaining the school garden, where they learn to grow their own food for the school canteen and to sell to parents.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The vast majority of pupils are keen to learn. They told inspectors that they love coming to school because learning is fun.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They enjoy the activities and space provided for them outside at lunchtime, and play happily together.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and this is reflected in their work, which is neat, tidy and well presented. The school site is clean, litter free and welcoming.
- A few parents who responded to Ofsted's free text service expressed concerns about some pupils' behaviour at school. School records show that the school's effective actions mean that any incidents of poor behaviour are not repeated. Leaders have recently implemented a new behaviour strategy, designed to provide the minority of pupils who need it with additional strategies to improve their emotional well-being and learning. Leaders have plans to share this new approach with parents.
- Overall, pupils' attendance is consistently high. However, some disadvantaged pupils are absent from school more than other pupils. Senior leaders are quick to step in and provide help and support for pupils and their families to ensure that their attendance improves.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve pupils' outcomes in reading and mathematics, which declined in 2016. The school's assessment records show substantial improvement in pupils' rates of progress this year. Leaders predict that, across all year groups, most pupils will now make at least the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics because of improved teaching. Evidence seen during the inspection and in pupils' books supports this.
- Pupils achieved above the national average at both the expected and higher standard in spelling, punctuation and grammar in 2016. Pupils' progress in writing was in line with national expectations in writing in 2016.
- The outcomes of disadvantaged pupils have been variable over the past few years. Although their attainment has sometimes been below the national average in some subjects, they have made good progress from often low starting points. At times, disadvantaged pupils' progress has exceeded that of other pupils nationally. However, the progress of disadvantaged pupils was disappointingly low in mathematics in 2016.
- Leaders carefully review and monitor the impact of the pupil premium funding, and do not continue with interventions if they are not working. Leaders have used some of the additional funding this year to improve disadvantaged pupils' progress in mathematics. School tracking and monitoring information shows that current disadvantaged pupils, who have received this additional support, have made accelerated progress in mathematics. However, senior leaders know that the progress of disadvantaged pupils needs to continue to remain a whole-school focus so that it consistently meets national expectations, particularly at the higher standard in all subjects.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive exceptionally good-quality care and support. A close eye is kept on individual pupils. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) engages effectively with external agencies to secure specialised support as necessary. This high level of support leads to successful outcomes for these pupils, and consequently most achieve well.

School details

Unique reference number	112572
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10023284

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	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charlotte Naylor and Sarah Taylor
Headteacher	David Brown
Telephone number	01159 322 568
Website	www.hallamfields.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	enquiries@hallamfields.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 June 2013

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized junior school.
- Since the last inspection, the school's senior leadership team and governing body have been restructured. Two new assistant headteachers have been appointed. The previous chair of governors has taken on the role of vice chair, and two governors now share the role of chair of governors. There have been a number of new staff appointments, including the appointment of five newly qualified teachers over the past two years.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional funding through the pupil premium is

above average.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. All lessons were seen jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and representatives from the governing body, including the two chairs and the vice chair of the governing body, and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised in detail a range of pupils' books from all year groups.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of the school's documentation which included: leaders' evaluation of the school's work and improvement plans; information on pupils' attainment and progress; behaviour, bullying and attendance records; safeguarding procedures; reviews of the use of the pupil premium and primary physical education and sport premium funding; and minutes of the governing body meetings.
- Inspectors observed behaviour around the school, including at break and lunchtimes. They spoke formally to two groups of pupils, and informally with others around the school. One inspector listened to pupils reading.
- There were 60 responses to Parent View for inspectors to view. Inspectors spoke with parents before school, and considered 49 responses from parents to the Ofsted free text service.
- Inspectors also considered 42 responses to the online pupil questionnaire and 13 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Sally Smith, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Aileen King	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Evans	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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