

# Mexborough Highwoods Primary School

Highwoods Road, Mexborough, South Yorkshire S64 9ES

## Inspection dates

16–17 March 2017

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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Middle leaders are not fully effective in their contribution to school improvement. They are unclear of their roles and responsibilities.
- Senior leaders and governors are not rigorous enough in their monitoring and have an overgenerous picture of the quality of teaching.
- Governors are not consistently supporting and challenging the school effectively.
- Teachers do not use assessment information well enough when planning lessons. Consequently, learning activities do not take into account pupils' different ability and learning needs.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
- In key stages 1 and 2, the progress pupils make from their starting points, particularly in mathematics and reading, is not consistently good.
- Teachers do not use learning time productively. Pupils spend too much time waiting for something or someone when they could be learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Relationships are good. Staff feel very well supported and valued by the leadership team.
- The attendance of most pupils is in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Those responsible for the safety and welfare of pupils are assiduous in record-keeping and monitoring.
- Pupils are kind, considerate and behave well.
- Children in the early years enjoy a well-resourced and planned environment, which meets their needs well.
- A well-planned curriculum teaches pupils about respect and tolerance.

## Full report

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

- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities and are held to account for the impact of that role in driving school improvement
  - senior leaders and governors have an accurate and up-to-date view of the quality of teaching through regular and rigorous monitoring
  - governors fully understand the information they receive from the school so that they are in a better position to challenge and support the school effectively.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school by ensuring that teachers:
  - have higher and more realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in basic literacy and numeracy skills
  - use assessment information more effectively to inform teaching and secure better progress for pupils of all abilities and needs
  - make better use of learning time for productive learning.

An external review of governance 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

- Senior leaders, alongside those who have given formal support to the school, have monitored, identified and improved weak teaching within the school. However, they have not kept up to date with this monitoring and their actions lack rigour. Consequently, they have an overly positive opinion of the quality of teaching across the school.
- Middle leaders, many who are new to post, have not developed the appropriate skills to effectively support the drive for school improvement. The leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or a disability, in particular, requires improvement. Pupils who need support are not accurately identified.
- Staff are very supportive of senior leaders. They are highly enthusiastic and want the pupils to be happy, well cared for and well educated in their school. This means they work well together and have created a cohesive team.
- School leaders have ensured that pupils benefit from a curriculum that excites them and gives them a broad range of opportunities, for example girls football clubs, choirs and performing productions such as 'Bugsy Malone'. Specialists, such as Rotherham football club and an arts award trainer, ensure the good quality of these clubs.
- Pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Numerous clubs and trips, such as to the Houses of Parliament, help pupils learn about the world around them, as does focused learning about different religions and beliefs. The primary school physical education and sports funding is used to enhance the curriculum further and support good improvement in skills.
- Senior leaders have used pupil premium funding well in supporting the academic, and particularly the pastoral, needs of disadvantaged pupils. For example, the learning mentor supports these pupils, and often their families, well and some benefit from trips and clubs that they would otherwise not be able to experience.
- Few pupils are supported by special educational needs funding in the school. However, the spending of this funding is not always as effective as it could be, largely due to current weaknesses in identifying pupils' needs accurately.

### Governance of the school

- Governors are enthusiastic and dedicated to supporting school improvement. Governors have ensured that finances are well spent and they keep a close eye on spending. At the moment, they do not have a clear enough understanding of what is happening in school and, therefore, the challenge and support they offer school leaders is not as successful as it could be. Governors have a range of skills that they could use to better effect to help school improvement.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff responsible for the recording and implementation of recruitment checks and training needs are highly efficient and well organised. Consequently, all staff have up-to-date training and they know their responsibilities regarding keeping pupils safe. A learning mentor, who is also the deputy designated safeguarding lead, has developed good relationships with families and pupils that may need support. Her liaison with other agencies, when appropriate, is good and her documentation is detailed and extremely well organised.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement, as teachers do not have sufficiently high and realistic expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in basic literacy and numeracy skills. Consequently, pupils often make slow progress in learning basic spellings and punctuation as these are not consistently and appropriately taught by teachers.
- Teachers use a pre-learning assessment tool to identify what pupils know before they begin to learn a new concept. However, they do not plan learning activities to take into account this information. Consequently, pupils of all abilities are often completing the same task, which does not allow them to learn at the rate relative to their abilities.
- Too often, pupils spend time in lessons waiting for adults to explain what they should be learning next. This is because work is often too easy or too hard or sometimes because they do not have the skills to access the learning activity so learning slows down.
- Teachers' expectations of behaviour are consistently high but when the quality of teaching is not good, a few pupils become fidgety and distracted.
- Teachers have built good relationships with pupils and this means pupils confidently ask questions when they do not understand and are willing to take risks and learn from mistakes they may make.
- Teaching assistants are knowledgeable and skilled at teaching and make a positive contribution to the learning that takes place in the classroom.

### Personal development, behaviour and welfare

### Good

#### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy taking on roles of responsibility and do so very well, particularly in Year 6.
- Pupils feel safe and are well educated about how to keep themselves safe, particularly on the internet.
- Adults make sure pupils have lots of opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge of England, for example when they learn how to use the London Underground.

- Pupils learn to listen and respect the opinion of others while they debate subjects in philosophy lessons.
- Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. Assemblies and other forms of celebration, such as house points, help everybody, including parents, share in celebrating success.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They conduct themselves well during the school day. They move around the school demonstrating kindness and courtesy to those they meet, including visitors.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance for the majority of pupils is the same as other pupils nationally.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what bullying is, including cyber bullying. They speak confidently about how infrequently bullying happens in their school. They also know that they can turn to any adult or the learning mentor if they need to discuss a sensitive or worrying issue.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Too many pupils do not make the progress they are capable of from their starting points in a range of subjects. Therefore, outcomes require improvement.
- Progress and attainment in mathematics has been low, particularly for Year 6 pupils, for the last two years. Outcomes in mathematics for the current Year 6 are more positive than previously seen but this is not consistent across the school.
- Pupils' outcomes in reading in 2016 were well below that of other pupils of the same age nationally with the same starting points. This low achievement can be seen in some other year groups currently in school, particularly key stage 2. Although leaders have taken action to tackle this weaker progress, the quality of teaching is not yet consistently strong enough to ensure that pupils make accelerated progress.
- Pupils who have low attainment are frequently misdiagnosed as having special educational needs. They have targets which are not clear or measurable. The support they are given is not monitored adequately enough. Consequently, these pupils do not make good progress.
- The introduction of a structured phonics-teaching programme has supported improvements in phonics for younger pupils. Results in the phonic screening checks in Year 1 and Year 2 have shown signs of steady improvement so that they now reach levels close to, or at, those of other pupils of the same age nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils generally make progress and reach levels of attainment that are, although lower than other pupils nationally of the same age, equal to or better than that of their peers in school. This positive progress is often due to the well-planned and good-quality intervention of teaching assistants.
- Pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2016 made great improvements in their levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics compared to pupils in Year 2 in

previous years.

- Current pupils in Year 6 are making strong progress across a range of subjects. These pupils are already reaching higher levels of attainment than the previous year's Year 6 pupils.

### **Early years provision**

**Good**

- Young children learn in an environment that is well planned and resourced to help them make good progress in all the key areas of learning. The good progress they make from starting points that are typical and sometimes slightly lower than typical, for their age, enables them to be well prepared as they move into key stage 1.
- The behaviour of children is good. They are kind and happy children who demonstrate that they can play well together and are happy to share resources with their friends.
- Girls and boys access all the different outdoor and indoor activities with equal enjoyment.
- Children's personal development is good. They are encouraged to learn a range of skills and take on roles of responsibilities. Children relish the job of serving the desserts at lunchtime and tidying up at the end of a learning session.
- Adults know when to stand back and let children learn and when to give valuable interactions to help guide learning. A child who was left alone demonstrated perseverance and fine motor skills when tying string to building blocks.
- Some adult-led sessions are overly long which inhibits learning in some skills and means some children struggle to maintain concentration.
- Leaders have an accurate idea of how children learn and how well they are doing. This helps adults set appropriate learning, which enables children to make good progress.
- Parents make good contributions to their children's learning. Home visits enable parents to contribute prior to their child starting school, and electronic 'learning journeys' mean they can contribute online to their child's successes, which some choose to do.

## School details

Unique reference number	106748
Local authority	Doncaster
Inspection number	10023945

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan Smith
Headteacher	Graham Rhodes
Telephone number	01709 583 273
Website	<a href="http://www.highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk">www.highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk">head@highwoods.doncaster.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	25–26 September 2012

## Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who receive additional support for special educational needs and/or disabilities, is higher than average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above average.
- Since the last inspection, there has been considerable change to the leadership team. The headteacher took up post in September 2015, following several years in the role of deputy headteacher.
- The school is expecting to convert to academy status in June 2017.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school has been receiving support from Partners in Learning, which was brokered by the local authority.
- 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.



## Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out over two days with three inspectors being present on the second day.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher took part in a large number of lesson observations alongside the inspection team and also looked at pupils' work in books with the inspection team.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils informally and formally and listened to them read. They also spoke to pupils about their work in books.
- Inspectors met and spoke with representatives of the governing body, external advisors, middle and senior leaders and teaching and non-teaching staff.
- The behaviour of pupils was observed throughout the two days.
- Twenty-three responses from the 27 members of staff were taken into account, as were 13 responses from pupils from the relevant questionnaires. There were no responses from parents to Parent View.
- A range of documents and policies regarding safeguarding, pupil and teacher performance and the monitoring of teaching and learning were studied.

## Inspection team

Jo Sharpe, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Elizabeth Lawley	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Florence	Ofsted Inspector

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