

Holly Hill Methodist CofE Infant School

New Street, Rubery, Rednal, Birmingham, West Midlands B45 0EU

Inspection dates

17–18 May 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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since the previous inspection, the newly appointed senior leadership team and governors have rapidly brought about significant change. They have addressed weaknesses and, as a result, current pupils are making considerably better progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders share senior leaders' clear ambition and vision for the school. They carry out frequent and thorough checks on the progress pupils are making in reading, writing and mathematics. This has accelerated the progress made by all pupils and in particular those who are disadvantaged.
- Additional funding is used well to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils. Strategies to help pupils catch up with their learning are effective and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making good progress from their different starting points.
- The welfare of pupils is a high priority. Safeguarding arrangements are effective.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards their learning are good. The school is calm and orderly, during work and at playtimes. Leaders robustly monitor behaviour incidents and work closely with the local authority to ensure that pupils' needs are suitably catered for.
- Early years provision is good. Most children make good progress in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Teachers plan engaging activities that help children to learn quickly, but assessment information is not used consistently well to move most-able children's learning forward quickly in the Nursery.
- Attendance has improved and the number of pupils who are away from school too often has reduced, but a small minority of pupils still miss too many days of school.
- In mathematics, English and religious education, work is presented well. However, in other subjects, pupils' work is not of such a consistently high quality. The curriculum in other subjects gives too little attention to the development of subject-specific skills.
- Parents are positive about the school and would recommend it to others. They feel that communication is good, that their concerns are dealt with quickly and they feel included in their children's learning.
- Pupils develop a strong respect for other cultures and religions through a religious education programme that includes visits to a range of places of worship.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further develop the curriculum beyond English and mathematics to increase the quality of provision for other subjects by:
 - setting out clear pathways of progression in each subject
 - building in key assessment activities to measure and demonstrate progress
 - making sure that tasks are pitched at a challenging level for all groups, especially the most able
 - ensuring that pupils have frequent opportunities to use and apply key skills of reading, writing and mathematics in subjects beyond English and mathematics.
- Raise achievement in the Nursery and Reception still further, by ensuring that teaching:
 - appropriately challenges the most able children, so they reach the highest standards of which they are capable
 - provides effective support to those pupils who underachieved previously so that they attain age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1.
- Further improve attendance and punctuality, especially for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, by:
 - closely tracking the attendance of individuals and key groups of pupils
 - building closer relationships with families and external partners and agencies to support improvements in attendance
 - ensuring that all review meetings for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged include discussions about attendance and strategies to reduce absence
 - ensuring that governors and improvement partners review attendance information more closely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strong leadership from the new headteacher and a relentless drive for improvement have led to rapidly improving outcomes for pupils. The headteacher is given good support by the able senior leadership team and helpful governing body. They responded decisively to the low outcomes of the last two years and this has ensured rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work. Together, they have established a culture of high expectations that has helped to improve the quality of teaching.
- Leaders have a good track record of improving teaching. The headteacher ensures that whole-school priorities are reflected in the targets for teachers at all levels and that they link closely to the progress that pupils make. Teachers' progress towards these targets is reviewed at regular intervals and any teachers not on track to achieve the standards are challenged. Leaders are not reluctant to take the necessary steps to improve teaching.
- The role of middle leaders has been greatly strengthened since the previous inspection. Team leaders who manage year groups or the early years provision clearly understand their roles. They observe lessons to check that pupils make good progress, and use information gleaned from this, the analysis of data and other activities to identify where provision can be improved further.
- Subject leadership has been especially effective in English and mathematics in securing the required improvements. In other subject areas, leaders are relatively new to their roles and, although they have made a start to improving provision, their impact thus far is less strong.
- School leaders use pupil premium funding effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. The use of a strong and effective teacher to support pupils in class and in small targeted groups has been very effective and, as a result, disadvantaged pupils are making at least good progress and diminishing the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils.
- The school has a significantly higher proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities than other schools nationally. These pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Their specific needs are addressed in a variety of ways, including effective support in class, additional interventions and access to support for their emotional or mental health needs. Leaders use funding effectively to address identified needs, including through the use of external agencies.
- The physical education and sport premium has made a positive difference to pupils' health and well-being. It funds a broad range of experiences, such as specialist sports coaches, as well as additional clubs and training for staff.
- The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The strong focus on pupils' personal development is particularly effective in developing their positive relationships with each other and with staff, and their kindness, resilience and thoughtfulness. Pupils learn about democracy through the school council and leaders ensure that there is a strong emphasis on teaching pupils about cultural diversity. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- The school receives effective support from a school improvement partner who provides a termly review of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. The school also works alongside a local teaching school to check standards and strengthen provision.
- The curriculum puts considerable emphasis on the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and on religious education. Leaders have correctly identified the need to further develop pupil's skills in other areas of the curriculum as robustly as these stronger curriculum areas.

Governance of the school

- Governance has improved substantially since the previous inspection. It is now strong, effective and challenging when necessary. Governors have an accurate picture of what the school does well and they know what still needs to be done. Governors receive a good deal of information from the headteacher and other leaders and they check on this by visiting the school regularly to challenge school leaders and hold them to account.
- Governors have a good understanding of how teachers' pay relates to performance. They set rigorous targets for the headteacher and review these regularly. They know how the school's leaders have improved teaching since the previous inspection and ensure that action is taken if teaching is not good enough.
- The attendance of some pupils needs to be more robustly monitored and challenged by governors. For example, while they are aware of the need to improve attendance, they have limited understanding of the underlying causes of this absence and need to work more closely with school leaders to address those pupils whose absence is slowing their academic progress.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because there are clear systems in place that members of staff follow consistently. Staff training is regularly updated so that they are clear about current guidance and the school's expectations.
- The site is secure and there is plenty of adult supervision when pupils are in class, on the move, outside at breaktimes or having lunch. Pupils say that they are safe in school and that there is always an adult to turn to if the need should arise.
- Leaders ensure that e-safety has a high profile and provide advice for parents about how to keep their children safe online. Leaders check carefully on pupils who transfer to other schools to ensure that they are kept safe. Staff are aware of their responsibilities related to children missing education.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Most classes are taught by permanent teachers and, as a result, pupils are making strong progress, although minor inconsistencies remain in the quality of teaching overall across the school. Teachers have good subject knowledge and structure learning effectively. Work is usually pitched well according to pupils' abilities, providing the right amount of challenge to move learning forward. The most effective teaching is focused and precise

and generates interest among pupils.

- Mathematics lessons provide pupils with the opportunity to use and apply their mathematics skills in a wide range of contexts. Teachers plan activities to help pupils move from the use of practical equipment to engaging with questions in more abstract ways in their books. Pupils respond well to these approaches, which help them to understand and visualise mathematical ideas. Mathematics books show that the majority of pupils are now making good progress in this subject.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported. Their needs are assessed accurately and interventions, both during lessons and in withdrawal groups, taught by a highly skilled intervention teacher, help them to make good progress from their starting points. Pupils who have complex social, emotional and mental health difficulties benefit from this highly skilled support.
- Teachers use questioning carefully to check pupils' understanding and to challenge their thinking. For example, in a mathematics intervention group, pupils were provided with an answer and asked to work out the question. This increased the level of difficulty of their number work. Teachers monitor pupils' learning to pick up and correct any misconceptions and to move their learning on.
- Staff teach reading well. They frequently hear pupils read and successfully engage parents in supporting their children. Home-school reading journals include regular dialogue between staff and parents. Pupils are keen to move on to the next stage in the colour-coded sequence of reading books.
- In mathematics and English, teachers insist that pupils set their work out well. Their strong emphasis on good handwriting and close attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation means that pupils' work is neat and easy to follow. However, this is not always the case in other subject areas and, as a result, the work in these books is not as well presented.
- The teaching of phonics is consistent across different groups. Teachers make effective use of the reading scheme, planning work to meet the range of abilities. Pupils discussed how they enjoyed reading and that it is an integral part of the work they are expected to do at home. Parents support the teaching of reading well and regularly sign or comment on progress in pupils' reading diaries.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils benefit from a wide-ranging programme which develops their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. It provides them with a strong moral code which enables them to differentiate between right and wrong.
- Pupils show respect and care for each other. They value their classmates' opinions and work happily and cooperatively in lessons. Their skills in paired and group discussions are very good. Pupils demonstrate tolerance and empathy for others.
- Pupils feel safe in the school and the majority of their parents agree. The wider curriculum and daily practice ensure a constant focus on pupils' well-being, placing a

strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual and emotional well-being. The impact of this shows in the positive relationships that exist in this happy school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards learning and behave well in class almost all of the time. Strong routines are in place in classes so that little learning time is lost. When teaching does not capture their interest or is too easy or hard for them, occasionally some pupils lose concentration and daydream. While this slows their own learning, it rarely distracts others.
- Pupils take pride in their work. Standards of presentation in pupils' books in mathematics, English and religious education show steady and consistent improvement and dips in these standards are unusual. However, the presentation of work in other curriculum areas is not always as strong.
- Attendance in 2016 was below the national figures for primary schools for all groups, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school identified a small minority of pupils who, for various reasons, had a significant impact on the overall attendance figures. Although the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved, more remains to be done.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Children join the early years with skills that are often well below those typical for their age. They make good progress in the early years to reduce the difference between their attainment and that of other pupils nationally, but they are not progressing rapidly enough to catch up completely.
- Pupils' work and the school's accurate assessment records indicate that pupils are currently making good or better progress from their individual starting points in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening checks increased considerably in 2016, to greatly diminish the difference between the school's figure and the national average. The school's tracking system and observation of phonics during inspection indicate that current pupils in Year 1 will do similarly well.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 was below average in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016. Current assessment information that has been externally moderated by the school's local authority partners indicates that attainment in reading, writing and mathematics will be considerably better this year.
- Senior leaders and governors recognised that not enough disadvantaged pupils were making sufficient progress when compared to other pupils nationally. Leaders' focus on bringing about necessary improvements has ensured that disadvantaged pupils are now making rapid progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They are on track to attain more highly than disadvantaged pupils in previous years and have caught up

and surpassed other pupils within the school.

- Pupils' work in books in mathematics and English is of a good standard and shows clear evidence of good progress over time. Tasks are appropriate to the age and ability of pupils and a range of topics are covered in depth. It is evident that pupils take a lot of pride in their work, and books are generally well presented; however, pupils are not making as consistently strong progress in other subjects, such as science and art.
- High-attaining children and children who had previously underachieved in the early years are now beginning to do well in school. In some year groups, they are making good progress and the differences between their attainment and that of other pupils in school are diminishing. Leaders recognise that there is still work to be done to further accelerate the progress of these groups of pupils and have introduced meetings with class teachers where pupils' progress is reviewed robustly to target underachievement.

Early years provision

Good

- Children are making good progress in the early years. Many arrive with very low starting points and need to be taught to speak and listen well and to take care of themselves. Staff quickly identify their needs and plan activities that help them acquire these skills. Outcomes for disadvantaged children are improving rapidly and additional funding is used very effectively. The difference in outcomes between boys and girls is narrowing when compared to their starting points.
- The environment is bright and stimulating, covering all areas of learning. There is a good range of well-planned, well-resourced activities that engage children's interest and ignite their curiosity. Children sustain concentration on engaging activities. Inspectors saw pupils practising fine motor skills, using plasticine to create shapes. Another group were using bean bags and hoops to order numbers to ten. These activities were well selected for the majority of children, but were not challenging enough for the most able children.
- There is a clear focus on developing the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Staff work hard to help children acquire these vital skills. Teachers and teaching assistants provide strong role models to enrich children's vocabulary and help them to develop good speaking and listening skills. Occasionally, adults do not provide enough time and opportunity for more reluctant children to speak.
- Adults observe children carefully when they begin school and make accurate baseline assessments of their skills and abilities. Assessment records are detailed. They identify the right next steps for individuals and groups because they build on what children already know and can do. However, these assessments are not robustly followed up for children who are most-able. The assessments also allow staff to check on children's progress. Teaching assistants provide effective support. They spot when children make mistakes and help them develop their skills.
- Children behave well. They are sociable, cooperative and polite. Should some children need support to manage their feelings or develop new friendships, it is always available from well-trained staff.

- The leader of the early years has a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. She knows what needs to be done to bring about further improvements and has plans in place to ensure that this happens.
- Parents are warmly welcomed. Parents offer their observations of what their children can do at home to add to what is seen in school through well-prepared learning journals.
- Children are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, although the attainment of children in these three areas is below the expectations for their age and stage of development. Disadvantaged children are making similar progress to others.
- Pupils are safe and well looked after. All safeguarding requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	103479
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032602

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Handford
Headteacher	Charlotte Taylor
Telephone number	0121 675 8700
Website	www.hollyhill.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@hollyhill.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	21–22 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Holly Hill Methodist CofE Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School is slightly smaller than the average-size primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average.
- Fewer than 20% of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and far fewer pupils speak English as an additional language than is found nationally.
- Children attend the Nursery class part time, becoming full time when they enter the Reception class.
- The school shares its site with a children's centre which is inspected by Ofsted separately.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 15 lessons, seven of which were observed jointly with members of the senior leadership team. Shorter visits were also made to classrooms to check on aspects of the school's work, and inspectors looked at how pupils behave around the school and at breaktimes.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, teachers, representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including safeguarding information, behaviour records, information about the progress that pupils make, the school's self-evaluation statement and improvement plan, and records of the work of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils about their work, heard them read and looked in detail at their books and other examples of work.
- Inspectors took account of nine responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, surveys of parents' opinions that the school had undertaken and also spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Max Vlahakis, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Michael Appleby

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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