

Highbank Primary and Nursery School

Winscombe Mount, Clifton Estate, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire NG11 9FP

Inspection dates

6–7 June 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

- The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher has led to a considerable improvement in standards since the last inspection.
- The quality of teaching has improved as a result of high expectations and good-quality professional development provided by school leaders.
- Governors and representatives of the Transform Trust provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.
- Robust systems are in place to check that teaching is effective and that pupils are making good progress. Staff take swift action to provide support to individuals when needed.
- From low starting points on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and most achieve standards that are at least in line with national averages by the end of key stage 2. The most able pupils achieve above-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall. Some make rapid progress to reach the expected standards for their age by the end of key stage 2.
- Children joining the school in the early years settle quickly and make rapid progress. They enjoy their learning and develop secure basic skills that will help them when they move to key stage 1.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and at other times of the school day. They have good attitudes to learning and appreciate the efforts of their teachers to make their lessons interesting.
- The school's ethos and core values promote respect and tolerance of others and encourage high aspiration. As a result, there is a happy atmosphere and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Pupils' safety and well-being is a high priority for the school. Safeguarding is effective.
- Improvements in pupils' achievement in key stage 1 have not been as strong as in the early years and key stage 2. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high, and their work is not always well presented.
- The curriculum is not as broad as it should be. Reading, writing and mathematics are covered well, but there are not enough opportunities to learn about other subjects in depth.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop the curriculum so that it provides opportunities for pupils to learn across a wide range of subjects and contexts by:
 - leaders identifying effective learning opportunities to extend and enrich current practice and revising the curriculum to include them
 - teachers providing opportunities for pupils to learn about a wider range of subjects in depth
 - teachers planning learning in which pupils use and apply their basic skills of literacy and numeracy in a range of subjects
 - leaders devising an implementation plan for the new curriculum to be introduced gradually and carefully evaluated to maintain standards.
- Ensure that pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 1 improves by ensuring:
 - all teachers have the same high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - teachers insist that pupils present their work neatly
 - leaders provide effective training and professional development to support improvements in the quality of teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The strong and determined leadership of the headteacher has resulted in a considerable improvement in standards throughout the school. With the support of other senior leaders, he has set high expectations and raised aspirations for pupils. He has promoted a culture of respect and tolerance that is underpinned by the school's core values.
- Since the appointment of the headteacher, there has been a relentless focus on raising standards by making sure pupils develop secure basic skills. He introduced systems to check pupils' achievement closely and identify the support they need if they are not making sufficient progress. This resulted in a high turnover of staff initially but staffing is now stable and the quality of teaching has improved. Leaders continue to check that teaching is effective and provide good quality professional development that is appreciated by staff. Leaders also work with colleagues from the Transform Trust to provide additional training and to check that the work of the school is effective.
- The leadership team is now stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Key staff have the experience and expertise to take leading roles in tackling the school's priorities for improvement. One consequence is that teachers plan and deliver lessons more consistently. Leaders check closely the attainment and progress of all groups of pupils. They hold regular meetings with teachers to decide how best to support any pupils at risk of falling behind.
- Disadvantaged pupils are effectively supported through the pupil premium. The school uses this funding carefully to support pupils' well-being and to ensure that they achieve as well as they can academically. Pupils are supported in different ways. For example, the school provides a breakfast club where pupils enjoy a good start to the day and additional tuition to make sure pupils achieve good standards before going on to secondary school.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has enabled the school to provide additional staff. These pupils are well supported and their progress is carefully checked. From their individual starting points, good teaching and well considered support mean that these pupils make good progress.
- The school uses the primary physical education and sport funding effectively to promote physical activity and increase participation in different sports. A range of opportunities, including during 'sports weeks', allows pupils to try out new sports and games. Membership of a local sports partnership provides opportunities for teachers to develop their own skills and expertise.
- Pupils have many opportunities to learn about life in modern Britain, as seen in displays of pupils' work around the school. An assembly held during the inspection focused on the general election. Pupils' answers to questions about mutual respect and tolerance showed their understanding of the democratic process.
- The curriculum currently provides effectively for learning in mathematics, reading and writing, where the school has rightly focused on developing pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy. It is not as broad as it should be, however, and pupils have

limited opportunities to learn about other subjects in depth.

Governance of the school

- The governing body supports leaders in promoting an ambitious culture for the school. Its members have recognised the challenges facing the school in recent years and have taken steps to secure strong leadership for the school, welcoming support from the trust while the new leadership team was established.
- Governors have a good understanding of the school as a result of their active involvement and the detailed information provided for them by the headteacher. Minutes of meetings of the governing body show that governors ask searching questions to ensure that they have an accurate picture of the school's performance.
- The governing body has been supportive of the headteacher in tackling underperformance and knows how teachers are held to account for pupils' achievement.
- Governors keep records of their visits to the school, noting what they have learned from their visits and identifying follow-up actions. All visits have a focus on school improvement.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety and well-being are high priorities for the school. Leaders ensure that all staff know how to report concerns and have the necessary training to recognise risk.
- School staff work with parents, families and other agencies to ensure that vulnerable pupils are well looked after and receive the support they need during difficult times.
- Incidents and concerns are logged carefully and documentation is detailed. The named governor for safeguarding makes regular checks to ensure that records are kept in line with the academy's policy.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection as a result of leaders' high expectations and effective professional development. Throughout the school, pupils enjoy their learning because teachers make every effort to make lessons interesting.
- Teachers whose practice is highly effective provide good role models for others who are less experienced. Colleagues are now working together more often and sharing successful ways of working. As a result, teaching is improving throughout the school. Leaders provide specific support to teachers whose practice is less effective and this is bringing improvements to the quality of their teaching.
- Teachers and teaching assistants teach phonics effectively. Adults support pupils well in developing a range of skills and strategies they can use in their independent tasks of reading and writing.

- Teachers ensure that there are frequent opportunities for pupils to read from a range of texts. Novels are often used as a context for pupils' writing. For example, pupils in Year 5 wrote newspaper reports about an incident involving Mr Stink, a character from a novel they had been reading. Teachers ensure that there is a clear focus on developing pupils' basic skills in writing. Pupils in key stage 1 showed their knowledge of grammar and punctuation while writing riddles.
- Teachers use different types of lesson to provide pupils with opportunities to learn and practise mathematical skills, then use their skills to solve problems. This enables pupils to develop their reasoning skills and tackle harder work. For example, pupils in Year 6 developed their understanding of percentages by working out the discount on air fares to find the best prices.
- In key stage 1, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough. The quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation, however, is not consistent and many books are untidy.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and appreciate the efforts of their teachers to make lessons interesting. Where teachers' expectations are highest, pupils take pride in their work and strive to improve. A Year 5 pupil proudly showed the inspector how his worked had improved since the beginning of term.
- Pupils are aware that rules and expectations are there to help keep them safe. They say the school's core values, 'the five Bs', make sure the school is a friendly place.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers to help them if they have any worries or concerns. Peer mediators often help with minor problems or disagreements. Pupils also use worry boxes to express a concern if they do not want to talk to someone directly.
- Pupils know the difference between bullying and falling out and would go to their teachers if they felt they were being bullied. One pupil said of his own experience that it was sorted out very quickly. School records show that the number of such incidents has reduced and is now infrequent.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons, most pupils are keen, pay attention and concentrate well on their work.
- Pupils also behave well at other times of the school day. They enjoy using the outdoor equipment provided at playtimes. Playground buddies from Years 5 and 6, 'are there to help at lunchtime and are very good', say pupils.
- Attendance has improved and is now close to the national average overall. The

proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school is reducing. A number of pupils, however, still do not attend school regularly and have high levels of absence. The school has clear procedures to follow up all absences thoroughly.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- From low starting points on entry to the school, pupils make good progress to achieve standards that are at least in line with national averages, and often better, at the end of key stage 2.
- Standards in 2015 were significantly below average. In 2016, attainment at the end of key stage 2 improved and was above average in reading and mathematics. Teachers' assessments for pupils currently in Year 6 show that these improvements have been maintained.
- The targeted use of pupil premium funding has meant the achievement of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 is similar to that of other pupils. The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2016 was broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress overall as a result of carefully planned support. Some pupils make rapid progress to achieve the standards expected for their age.
- The most able pupils make good progress from their starting points and achieve greater depth in their learning, reaching standards that are above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils read with confidence and enthusiasm, using skills and strategies they have been taught. They talk about the books they like and explain why they enjoy them. A relatively small proportion of pupils read regularly at home but the school provides frequent opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills in lessons. During the inspection, younger children were seen enjoying a story being read to them during snack time.
- Pupils' books show that pupils make good progress and that the majority are working at standards appropriate to their age. There is more evidence of high-quality work in Years 5 and 6 than in earlier years. At the end of key stage 1 in 2016, pupils' attainment was broadly in line with national averages. Teachers' assessments of pupils in the current Year 2 show a similar picture. There has been clear improvement since 2015, when standards were significantly below average, but the pace of change has been slower than in key stage 2. This is because teachers' expectations have not been high enough and the gains made in the early years have not been built on effectively.

Early years provision

Good

- Pupils start school in the Nursery with skills and knowledge well below what is typical for their age. The school offers parents the opportunity of full-time places; the additional time is funded by the school. This enables children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to get off to a good start and make good progress.

- Teaching in the Reception class is strong. Staff in the early years have worked together to strengthen provision in the Nursery class and this is leading to improvements in progress. By the end of their first year in school, children are beginning to catch up. By the following year, effective teaching enables children to make rapid progress and when they leave the Reception class, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above average.
- The leadership of the early years is effective. Learning is planned meticulously and there are rich opportunities for children to develop a range of basic skills that they can then use for other tasks. The outdoor learning environment is well ordered and reflects the learning that is going on inside. Leaders ensure that there are opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's learning; family learning courses are also available. As a result, parents' evenings are well attended and engagement with parents is improving.
- All adults have high expectations of the children. Accurate assessment means that teachers plan activities using the skills and knowledge the children have already learned that promote good progress for all children. For example, children in the role-play area, set up as a café, used their counting skills to 'pay' for their meals. They also demonstrated good social skills as they served each other and then offered the inspector 'a takeaway if you're too busy'.
- Children behave well and work cooperatively, skilfully supported by adults who use the 'five Bs' to remind them of the school's expectations. They enjoy the learning environment, which is full of interesting and engaging opportunities, and use the resources sensibly.
- The children's experiences in the early years help them to develop a wide range of skills that prepare them well for Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	140017
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	10031147

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The academy trust
Chair	Alison Day
Headteacher	Giles Civil
Telephone number	0115 915 2965
Website	www.highbankprimary.co.uk/
Email address	admin@highbank.nottingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 July 2015

Information about this school

- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about the curriculum.
- The school became an academy on 1 October 2013, sponsored by the Transform Trust. The headteacher took up his post on 1 September 2014.
- Full-time provision is available for Nursery children.
- Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities 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 key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, inspectors observed learning in all classes. Some classes were visited more than once. One observation was carried out jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with school leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the Transform Trust. They also spoke with parents informally during the inspection and took into account the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and safeguarding records. Inspectors looked in detail at assessment information and records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- There were no responses to the online questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors spoke with pupils during the inspection and listened to pupils read. Inspectors also reviewed pupils' workbooks.
- There were no responses to the online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Jane Salt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector
Dorothy Stenson	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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