

Heathlands Primary Academy

Heath Way, Castle Bromwich, Birmingham, West Midlands B34 6NB

Inspection dates

20–21 June 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	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since converting to an academy, the school has experienced several changes in senior leadership. As a result, improvements have not been sustained, and this has had a detrimental effect on pupils' progress and outcomes.
- Governors have been slow to identify and address the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. They do not check on the school's performance rigorously enough.
- Teaching does not enable all pupils to make good progress because it is often pitched at middle-ability pupils. Teachers do not challenge the most able pupils enough.
- In 2016, fewer than half of the pupils in Year 6 reached the expected national standard in reading.
- Some leaders are very new to their roles. Their work has not yet had time to help the school to improve and make a difference to raising levels of achievement.
- Attendance is not improving quickly enough and it remains below the national average. Too many pupils arrive at school late.
- The school's website does not meet with the requirements of the Department for Education for what should be published.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher and a dedicated team of recently appointed leaders have made significant changes since September 2016 that are rapidly improving the school.
- Pupils' personal development is good and there is a strong sense of community within the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive.
- Pupils' behaviour in class and on the playground is usually good. Their attitudes to learning are positive.
- The quality of education in the early years is good. Children achieve well because their individual needs are well met, and the leadership of this provision is effective.
- Most of the current pupils are making better progress now and are catching up. This is particularly evident in reading.
- The large majority of parents are happy with the school. They feel that their children are looked after and taught well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors improve their systems for checking on the school's performance so they can hold leaders rigorously to account for pupils' outcomes
 - the school website is compliant with the Department for Education's requirements
 - middle leaders are provided with the support and training to further develop so that they take greater responsibility for wider school improvement.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - teachers take into account pupils' prior knowledge and plan work which is well matched to their needs so all pupils make good progress, particularly the most able pupils
 - teachers maintain the focus on developing pupils' reading ability so more pupils attain at least the expected standard in reading by the end of key stage 2
 - pupils are provided with learning tasks that are sufficiently open ended so they can work for a sustained period of time and demonstrate their full ability.
- Improve the attendance of pupils and ensure that all pupils arrive at school on time.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The school has experienced a significant amount of turbulence in leadership over the last few years. This instability has led to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment, which have slowed the progress of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 in a range of different subjects. Senior leaders' initiatives were not sufficiently sustained and the school's progress stalled as a result.
- In September 2016, a new and experienced headteacher took up post. He quickly set about identifying what needed to be improved and put plans in place to address shortcomings. Without delay, and with the full support of staff, the headteacher implemented a raft of changes, which brought about improvements in the quality of teaching. The school is now improving at pace.
- The role of middle leaders in coordinating curriculum subjects is still very much in its infancy as most are relatively new in post. While these leaders show some understanding of their subjects in different key stages, they have yet to have a wider impact on pupils' standards and achievement across the school.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The headteacher has a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and areas that need improvement. There is an effective process in place to closely monitor teachers' work and provide training and support where necessary. This contributes well to improvements in teaching and is leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Until recently, leaders had not made effective use of the pupil premium funding. The strategy to support disadvantaged pupils did not properly consider the barriers that these pupils faced. As a result, support was not well focused and the progress pupils made was too variable. Current support for disadvantaged pupils is more closely targeted to their needs, especially in reading. This is having a positive effect on their progress across the curriculum.
- It is only recently that the trust has been able to secure a permanent senior leadership team for the school. These new leaders have shown the capacity to bring about the necessary changes and improvements. As a result of their work, the quality of teaching is improving and pupils are making better progress.
- Over the last year, the trust has provided more effective support and helped to stem the decline in pupils' achievement. However, prior to this, trust leaders were not rigorous enough in checking on the school's work. Governors were left to flounder, and some of the trust's activities have not had the intended impact on leadership or pupils' outcomes. For example, despite the trust's review of governance in 2016, this aspect of leadership still requires improvement.
- The headteacher and other staff work in close partnership with the trust's director of primary academies. The director's work is particularly effective because he provides a high degree of challenge to the headteacher and other leaders. This is helping to improve practice and raise levels of achievement. Teachers, too, benefit from the trust's support. For example, the early years lead has developed her leadership skills successfully through working with a teaching and learning adviser from the trust.

- The curriculum has recently been overhauled because, previously, it was not meeting pupils' needs. The new curriculum provides an increasing range of opportunities to support the development of pupils and widen their experiences. Teachers plan stimulating topics, which capture pupils' attention and enable them to apply their skills across different subjects. For example, Year 3 pupils successfully applied their problem-solving skills in science to investigate the strength of different magnets. However, leaders acknowledge that there is still further work to do before the curriculum fully caters for the needs of the most able pupils.
- The curriculum is enriched by educational visits, which help to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, younger pupils benefited from a visit to Warwick Castle as part of their topic on castles and had a first-hand experience of a castle. There are also several extra-curricular clubs, including multi-sports, football and choir, which are all well attended and positively support pupils' personal development.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is developed well because it is incorporated into the curriculum. Teachers also seize opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils sensitively explored the subject of equality between boys and girls in sports.
- Leaders' work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Funding is used appropriately to provide suitable support for these pupils so they make good progress. The special educational needs coordinator checks on how well-targeted work with pupils has helped them to achieve.
- Leaders have made good use of the extra funding that the school receives to promote physical education (PE) and sport. It has been used to develop the expertise of staff, enabling them to teach PE more confidently and with greater competence. The funding has also helped to engage a growing number of pupils in more sport and increase their levels of physical activity.

Governance of the school

- Governance requires improvement because governors do not play enough of a strategic role in the life of the school. While governors do ask questions, they are too reliant on reports from the trust and information from the headteacher to evaluate the work of the school effectively. They have not done enough to contribute to strategic planning and evaluation, or to prevent the deterioration in pupils' achievement over time.
- Governors have not ensured that the school complies with what should be published on the school's website. This means that parents do not have all of the available information and are not as well informed as they should be.
- Governors have had limited training and support to develop their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. This has meant that they have not held leaders to account for the school's performance as well as they should have done. Other aspects of their work are stronger. For example, they ensure that their statutory responsibilities are fully met to keep pupils safe.

- Governors show commitment to the school and recognise the challenges ahead. They show a genuine desire for the school to succeed. More recently, governors have started to visit the school more regularly to help them to gain a better insight into the school's strengths and weaknesses.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. This is because staff prioritise keeping children safe. Leaders have provided the necessary training to ensure that all staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting pupils from harm. Leaders have created a strong culture of vigilance and action within the school. Staff remain constantly alert to any concerns about a child and report any worries they may have promptly. These concerns are followed up quickly. Those responsible for managing safeguarding work closely with other agencies to make sure that pupils are well cared for and receive the support they need.
- Leaders make all the necessary checks on staff and volunteers to ensure that they reduce the risk of unsuitable adults working with children. These checks are overseen effectively by governors and the trust.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of how to stay safe are well developed. They know how to protect themselves when online. Pupils could confidently talk about road safety and about what they would do if they were being bullied.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving quickly, although there are aspects that remain weak. Teaching is not yet good because some teachers do not plan learning activities that are well matched to the needs of all pupils. All too often, they plan work which is aimed at the needs of middle-ability pupils. This limits the progress of some groups because lower-attaining pupils find the work too difficult and others find it too easy.
- The most able pupils are often held back in their development of knowledge and understanding. This is because teachers do not provide work that is challenging enough to allow pupils to delve more deeply into their learning and achieve at greater depth.
- More recently, teachers are making better use of assessment information to form an accurate picture of what each child can achieve. However, some teachers are not yet using this information sufficiently well to plan the next steps in learning.
- The teaching of writing is improving and pupils write confidently for a range of purposes. However, sometimes pupils' progress is restricted because teaching is over-structured and there is little opportunity for pupils to work on their own for a sustained period of time. This prevents them from demonstrating their full potential.
- Following the school's spotlight on reading at the start of the academic year, the teaching of this subject has strengthened. As a result, current pupils enjoy reading and are achieving well. They show good levels of comprehension and read fluently. For example, Year 6 pupils reading 'Holes' by Louis Sachar correctly explained how the author had created atmosphere in the story.

- The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is particularly effective and helps pupils to make good progress in their reading.
- In most of the teaching observed, teachers used questioning skilfully to draw out pupils' understanding and explain their thinking. This enables pupils to make sense of their learning and make better progress. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher asked effective questions to help pupils accurately use a contents page in a non-fiction book.
- Teachers and teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specific interventions and individual guidance help the majority of these pupils to succeed and make good progress from their starting points. For example, in a mathematics lesson, a teaching assistant provided encouragement and well-thought-out questions to enable pupils to make amounts that added to 10.
- Teachers work hard to try to make topics relevant to pupils. Where this is successful, pupils are engaged and genuinely interested in their learning. For example, older pupils explored digits in a barcode sequence in mathematics and recognised the relevance and importance of mathematics in everyday use.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Teachers capitalise on opportunities to support pupils' personal development. For example, older pupils were encouraged to be reflective in an English lesson after reading an extract from 'Bridge to Terabithia'. In response to a pupil's comment, the teacher asked, 'Do you agree? Do you want to challenge?' Pupils shared their views and questioned the opinions of others with sensitivity.
- The learning mentor team provides very effective support for pupils who may be experiencing some emotional turmoil. Staff provide a listening ear and help pupils to resolve some of their social difficulties, so they are more receptive to learning. Pupils value this support and are able to explain how it helps them. The mentors' guidance and advice supports effectively the promotion of pupils' mental well-being.
- Vibrant displays of pupils' work, including good examples of writing, adorn the corridor walls and reflect the improving outcomes. Most pupils show pride in their work, which helps them to develop their self-esteem and recognise that they can achieve. Leaders work hard to raise pupils' aspirations. The display 'One day I will achieve...' reflects pupils' hopes and dreams for the future. One pupil wrote, 'One day I will find a cure for asthma.'
- Strong relationships between pupils and their teachers ensure a positive climate for learning in classrooms, where pupils are willing to try to succeed. Pupils listen well to each other and collaborate, sharing their learning.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They said that bullying is uncommon, although when it does occur leaders are quick to act and ensure

that it stops.

- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They have an understanding about different religions and cultures, and show respect for individual differences. Pupils were keen to share their knowledge about Sikhism and the similarities with their own faith.
- Most parents spoke favourably about the school and said that their children enjoy coming to school and learn well. A few parents expressed concerns about the instability in the school's leadership.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because overall attendance rates remain stubbornly low. There has been a gradual improvement over time, but pupils' attendance is not improving quickly enough. Leaders have adopted a wide range of strategies to support families with attendance issues. Despite leaders' best efforts, there are still too many pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should.
- While the number of pupils who arrive late to school has significantly reduced since September 2016, there are still too many pupils who arrive late in the morning. This means that they miss the start of lessons and important learning.
- Pupils get along together and show a good sense of community spirit, helping each other in the classroom and on the playground. Lunchtime is a friendly, social experience when pupils show good manners and respond well to the requests of lunchtime supervisors.
- There has been a rising trend of fixed-term exclusions over the last three years. However, the arrival of the new headteacher, bespoke support programmes for vulnerable pupils and greater involvement of parents have led to a significant reduction in the exclusion rate.
- Pupils usually demonstrate good behaviour and are enthusiastic participants in learning. They play well together on the playground, joining in with games such as cricket, and playing fairly. They have a clear understanding of the school's revised behaviour policy and expectations, introduced earlier in the year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes require improvement because the quality of teaching has not enabled pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, to make good progress over time from their individual starting points. By the end of key stage 2 in 2016, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was below national averages.
- The needs of the most able pupils have not been well catered for. In 2016, no pupils were assessed as working at greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics by the end of key stage 1. Similarly, no pupils attained greater depth in writing at the end of key stage 2. Very few pupils attained at the higher levels in reading and mathematics compared to national figures.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, signs of improvement in outcomes are clearly visible. The achievement of current pupils, across all groups, is improving.

However, due to previous underachievement, accelerated progress is required in order for pupils to catch up and reach the standards of which they are capable.

- Year 1 pupils achieve well in phonics because of the increasingly good teaching of this aspect of reading. There have been year-on-year improvements, which resulted in the proportion of pupils passing the phonic screening check in 2016 exceeding the national average.
- Most of the current pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do well as a result of effective teaching and bespoke support. Individual learning plans for these pupils, combined with regular discussions between the special educational needs coordinator and class teachers are helping to improve their rates of progress, particularly in mathematics.
- Until recently, the pupil premium has not been effectively targeted to support the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and help them to overcome their barrier to learning. As a result, their progress has been inconsistent.
- In 2016, less than half of all Year 6 pupils attained the expected standard in reading. However, leaders' determined efforts to improve standards in this subject have been successful. Current pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress and display positive attitudes to reading for pleasure. Those pupils who read to inspectors did so confidently and accurately.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different ethnic backgrounds generally make good progress. This is because teachers provide regular and effective opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years is led well. The early years leader has an accurate view of the setting's strengths and areas for development. She has a comprehensive plan for further improvement.
- Children achieve well in the early years because of effective teaching. The proportion of children attaining a good level of development has risen, year on year since 2013. In 2016, it rose to above the national figure. Additional funding is spent effectively, and disadvantaged children achieve at least as well as others. Teachers prepare children well to be ready for Year 1.
- The Nursery class provides a safe, nurturing environment where all children make good progress and develop a wide range of skills through the exciting learning opportunities provided. Relationships between children and adults are particularly strong and this supports learning well.
- Children have developed good levels of confidence and are keen to work independently. This is helped by the successful 'passport' scheme where children take responsibility for completing six tasks over the course of a week, helping them to understand the importance of personal responsibility.
- In the Reception classes, children use the wide range of resources very effectively to develop their social and collaborative skills. They engage in self-directed learning activities and play together well. For example, a small group of children played 'schools'

and excitedly taught puppets about road safety and how to sound out words.

- The teaching of phonics and early literacy skills is effective. Children write confidently for a range of purposes, using their phonic knowledge to spell age-appropriate words correctly. Teachers provide a language-rich environment and create good opportunities for children who speak English as an additional language to develop their vocabulary and understanding.
- Parents and carers are kept well informed about their children's progress. They are invited into school to attend various workshops to help them to gain a better understanding of the early years curriculum and how children are taught.
- Children show good behaviour because teachers have established good routines. They are happy and confident to contribute their ideas to group discussions. Children listen attentively to instructions and are quick to respond to teachers' requests and directions.
- Teachers in the early years have a very good knowledge of how young children learn and develop. They generally use this knowledge well to provide a good range of purposeful activities to help children's learning and development to flourish. Sometimes staff miss opportunities to provide additional challenges for the most able children to really make them think or grapple with a problem.

School details

Unique reference number	140890
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032644

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	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Grahame Robertson
Headteacher	Peter Higgins
Telephone number	0121 747 2705
Website	www.heathlnd.bham.sch.uk/
Email address	enquiry@heathlnd.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Heathlands became a converter academy in June 2014. The school is part of Education Central Multi-Academy Trust, which provides a range of support.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about key stage 2 results, the curriculum, equality objectives or the accessibility plan.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about key stage 2 results, the curriculum, equality objectives or the accessibility plan.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils are of Asian or Asian British heritage. The next largest group is White British. There is a wide range of other ethnic groups represented.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding is much higher than the national average.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes throughout the school. Some observations were carried out jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work.
- Inspectors gathered the opinions of pupils about their experience of school. Some pupils were heard reading during lessons and inspectors asked them about their reading habits.
- An inspector held a meeting with a group of staff and spoke to other staff about how the school keeps pupils safe.
- An inspector met with governors from the local governing board and a representative from Education Central Multi-Academy Trust.
- Inspectors took into account the views of parents from the school's own questionnaire because there were insufficient responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with parents on the playground and considered comments from Ofsted's free text facility.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of school documentation provided by leaders, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, minutes of meetings and pupils' assessment information. Inspectors also gathered information from the school's website.

Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Evans	Ofsted Inspector
Jeannette Mackinney	Ofsted Inspector
John Bates	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Bailie	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017