

Heathfields Infant School

Saxon Close, Wilnecote, Tamworth, Staffordshire B77 5LU

Inspection dates

21–22 November 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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- During a prolonged period of turbulence in school leadership, standards fell. However, since the appointment of the new executive headteacher, leaders have taken rapid action to improve the quality of education for pupils.
- Strong leadership from the executive headteacher, and her relentless drive to improve the quality of teaching, has led to good outcomes for pupils.
- The quality of teaching is typically good and improving. As a result, the large majority of pupils make good progress in their learning. Occasionally, some pupils are not challenged enough in their lessons and do not achieve their full potential.
- Pupils' outcomes are rising. In 2017, the proportions of pupils who met the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were all above the national average.
- Pupils' achievement in writing is not as strong in comparison with reading and mathematics. This is because, up until recently, the teaching of writing in key stage 1 was not tailored closely enough to pupils' individual needs.
- The governing body is effective. It holds leaders robustly to account for the school's performance.
- Parents are, without exception, overwhelmingly positive about what the school provides for their children. They are fully supportive of the school's work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Relationships between staff and pupils support effective learning. There is a strong sense of community throughout the school where everyone is encouraged to feel included.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception classes. Teachers promote a love of learning and help children to quickly gain in independence. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- The school's work to safeguard pupils is effective. Leaders go the extra mile to support vulnerable children and their families.
- Most teaching assistants add good value to pupils' learning. Sometimes, a few do not have enough subject-specific knowledge to challenge pupils effectively.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for key stage 1 pupils in writing by ensuring that all teachers:
 - routinely identify and address errors in pupils' spelling
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills across the curriculum and improve writing stamina
 - give better support to pupils to help them edit and improve their work
 - enable pupils to develop a fluent, legible style of handwriting.
- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils' thinking, particularly of the most able pupils, so even more achieve the higher standards of which they are capable.
- Further develop leadership and management by ensuring that leaders develop the subject knowledge of teaching assistants, especially those who take responsibility for teaching a foundation subject.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strong and determined leadership has put the school firmly back on track following a significant period of upheaval in staffing and governance. Stability has been restored and the relatively new executive headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders, has accelerated the school's progress to ensure that, once again, pupils achieve good outcomes.
- The executive headteacher is resolute in her goal to ensure that every pupil gets the best education possible. She has rapidly brought consistency and ambition to a school that was previously on the verge of failure. The executive headteacher has established a positive staff culture and raised the expectations of everyone to enable pupils to achieve well. No longer are pupils or staff deterred when they experience setbacks. Instead, they show resilience, have greater self-belief and try again until they succeed.
- Leaders know precisely what they need to do to improve the school further; they are never complacent. They put in place effective plans of action to address any shortcomings and monitor outcomes carefully. Leaders are highly responsive to feedback from others, including parents, and act quickly to resolve any issues that arise. Leaders' capacity to improve the school further is strong.
- Senior leaders successfully identify talent and leadership potential in others. They harness this potential to build even greater leadership capacity. New leaders report feeling empowered because they are given opportunities to try out new initiatives and develop their subject areas. Middle leaders, despite some being relatively new to post, are already having a demonstrable impact on teaching, leading to better outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders frequently check on the quality of teaching to recognise strengths and identify areas that need attention. Staff receive a wide range of bespoke training opportunities, which help them to develop professionally. They value the guidance and advice they receive, and appreciate the supportive culture that leaders have created. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is good and improving.
- The leader for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities uses additional funding to make sure that the specific needs of pupils are catered for effectively. Early identification of need, bespoke teaching programmes and careful tracking of progress enables pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to achieve well. Pupils who have an education, health and care plan are allocated a key worker and receive individualised support which meets their needs particularly well.
- Parents and carers are unanimous in their praise for the school. They use words like 'fantastic', 'welcoming' and 'supportive' when describing the school. All parents who responded to Ofsted's parent survey, or that were spoken to, felt that their children were happy and safe in school. Leaders have been successful in establishing a tangible community spirit through different events such as family cooking afternoons. These sessions are popular and well attended.
- A new curriculum was introduced last year after leaders identified a lack of breadth in relation to subjects. The curriculum now provides pupils with a broad range of

experiences across all subjects, and this enables pupils to progress well. Exciting topics such as 'Paws, claws and whiskers' are well chosen and grab the pupils' interests. Good links are made between subjects, which help pupils to make more sense of their learning.

- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. It is supplemented with a range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, which make a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Leaders use additional funding effectively to benefit pupils' achievement. The use of the sports premium funding has been reviewed recently, so that it can be targeted more carefully to have a greater impact on pupils' physical and personal development. Early indicators show that these changes are already proving successful.
- Following a period of leadership instability and a fall in overall standards, the local authority rightly increased their involvement with the school. The local authority continues to challenge the school well and provide it with some support, especially in relation to supporting new leaders.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. A new chair of the governing body, appointed in September 2017, works closely with the executive headteacher to ensure that the good work of the school is maintained and built upon. The governing body has been judicious in its appointment of new governors, ensuring that only those who join have a strong skill set which complements others and meets the needs of the governing body. Governors are knowledgeable about new developments in governance and education because they attend relevant training.
- Governors know the school well. They know the school's strengths and what action needs to be taken to improve it further. Governors have a good understanding about pupils' performance information, including the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and ask challenging questions of leaders. They hold school leaders to account robustly.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff are proactive in their efforts to keep pupils safe. They are clear about reporting procedures and take action swiftly when necessary. Following an overhaul of systems and processes a year ago, the revised arrangements in place to record concerns are more rigorous and effective. Leaders with responsibility for safeguarding work closely with other agencies to support pupils and their families effectively.
- All staff have up-to-date knowledge of safeguarding matters because leaders ensure that they have annual training and regular briefings about how to keep pupils safe. Staff are vigilant, understand their safeguarding duties and identify potentially vulnerable pupils without delay. When necessary, staff put in place suitable arrangements to protect pupils.
- Leaders and governors ensure that staff and volunteers undergo all necessary

recruitment checks to satisfy themselves that new staff are fit to work with children.

- The school site is safe and secure. Staff supervision of pupils is good, and pupils report that they feel safe while in school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers plan purposeful, carefully structured activities, which enable pupils to make good progress in their learning. Teaching is usually lively and engaging, which captures pupils' interests and makes learning enjoyable. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson, pupils filled different containers with rice and made comparisons. They worked with great enthusiasm and extended their mathematical understanding about capacity.
- Teachers expect pupils to achieve and convey this message consistently, and with sensitivity. It is not uncommon to hear a pupil struggling with a task say, 'I can't do this...' quickly followed by the teacher restating, 'I can't do this yet...' The pupil, with support and encouragement, often perseveres and completes the task successfully.
- Teachers keep a watchful eye on how pupils are progressing during lessons. They intervene accordingly to help pupils maintain a steady pace of learning. Teachers' effective subject knowledge is used well to address any misconceptions pupils have at the point at which they arise.
- Teaching across the wider curriculum is often imaginative and provides pupils with hands-on practical experiences, which develop their thinking skills. In science, for example, Year 2 pupils explored a variety of materials and made good predictions about which soap might create the best bubbles.
- Teaching assistants usually make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. They ask pertinent questions to help pupils move forward in their learning, gently supporting if a pupil gets stuck. Sometimes teaching assistants lack subject-specific knowledge in areas such as religious education. This hampers pupils' progress and prevents them from achieving a real depth of understanding.
- In mathematics, teachers plan lessons which cater for a range of abilities and develop pupils' knowledge and mathematical reasoning skills well. Teachers use 'Reasoning Rex' challenges to encourage pupils to think logically and reason. Year 1 pupils confidently solved missing number problems and gave good explanations for their reasoning.
- The teaching of phonics and reading is a strength. Pupils read age-appropriate books with fluency and understanding. However, not all pupils apply their phonics skills well to spell accurately. Guided reading activities help pupils to develop good comprehension skills.
- Teachers are knowledgeable about what pupils are already able to do. They usually use this information well to match work to pupils' different needs. Most pupils relish the opportunity to complete 'challenge tasks' so they can demonstrate their ability. Despite this, sometimes pupils are not stretched enough and do not get chance to show their greater depth of understanding. This is especially the case with the most able pupils.
- In the past, there has been some variation in the quality of the teaching of writing. This has resulted in pupils' progress not being as strong compared with reading and mathematics. Teaching has improved, although a few inconsistencies remain in relation

to teachers providing explicit guidance matched to need, to help pupils revise and improve their writing.

- While spelling is taught regularly, teachers do not consistently identify and address pupils' specific spelling difficulties. This means that some pupils continue to make the same spelling mistakes in their books over time.
- The handwriting of some pupils is poorly formed, which makes their writing difficult to read. There are a significant minority of pupils in Year 2, often boys, who do not hold their pencil correctly. This hampers their ability to write fluently and sometimes slows their progress.

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 created a nurturing, learning environment where pupils are gently encouraged to try their hardest. Pupils feel well-looked-after and supported. They are exposed to different situations to help them develop resilience and confidence. For example, pupils confidently recounted a recent zoo visit to parents in a class assembly.
- Leaders work hard to ensure that all pupils feel included and part of the school community. They put in place arrangements to minimise pupils' barriers to learning and participation. For example, some pupils choose to attend the lunchtime 'signing club' to learn how to sign. They use their skills extremely confidently to sing and sign along to songs such as 'I can sing a rainbow'.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations because they are taught well through the personal, social and health education curriculum. They know how to get help if they need it and are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe when they are online. Pupils are encouraged to make healthy choices about food. They understand the importance of a balanced diet.
- Pupils say that bullying is not a problem at their school, and if it did occur, they could rely on an adult to sort it out.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because staff make experiences fun and worthwhile. Pupils who arrive early to school join the 'Wake up, Shake up' club. This involves an energetic physical exercise routine that helps to prepare pupils well for the day ahead. They participate enthusiastically.
- Leaders have created a safe and caring environment where pupils are helped to respect each other for their individual difference and get along together. Pupils build friendships well and show genuine concern for each other.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The large majority of pupils behave very well as a result of teachers' high expectations and consistent use of the school's behaviour policy. Pupils understand the 'good to be

green' system and adhere to the expectations. Leaders carefully track pupils' behaviour and provide quick support if there are any signs of deterioration.

- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and settle down to tasks quickly. Occasionally, pupils who are working independently drift off task and need to be refocused by the teacher. A brief reminder by the teacher is usually enough to promptly return the pupil's attention to the task in hand.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly in line with the national average. The school works effectively with families to address any concerns with low or falling attendance. Leaders' efforts to improve punctuality have proved effective; fewer pupils are now late to school.
- Pupils enjoy each other's company on the playground and play well together. The school council has recently introduced more fun activities during lunchtime that pupils can choose.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders' concerted efforts to raise levels of achievement across the school have paid dividends. The majority of current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the effective teaching they receive. Pupils are well prepared for the challenges of Year 3.
- Prior to 2015, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 had been consistently well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Following this period, standards steadily rose, although writing lagged behind reading and mathematics. By 2017, the proportions of Year 2 pupils achieving the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics were all above the national averages.
- Year-on-year, increasingly more pupils are achieving the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. However, the proportions of Year 2 pupils attaining at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics remain below the national average.
- Pupils display an interest in reading because teachers promote reading for pleasure. Pupils are motivated by the school's reading challenge, where they can achieve awards after reading a set number of books. Other pupils enjoy taking home the 'Reading Otter' to encourage them to read.
- There have been improving outcomes in Year 1 phonics over time. For the last two years, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check has been above the national average. This is as a result of good teaching of early reading skills.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points due to the effective support they receive.
- As a result of some inconsistencies with the teaching of writing in Year 1 last year, current Year 2 pupils have some gaps in their knowledge. However, better teaching is enabling pupils to catch up and diminish the difference in outcomes between writing and the other core subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of the early years is a strength. The leader knows the areas for development within the setting because of accurate evaluation of the quality of teaching and impact on children's outcomes. Leaders' plans are effective in bringing about improvements. For example, leaders have raised the profile of boys' writing and increased rates of progress.
- There is good teaching across all classes in the early years. Teachers plan tasks that are well matched to the needs of the children. This enables them to make strong progress. In 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was above the national average. In 2017, the proportion increased further. As a result, children leave the early years well prepared for Year 1.
- Given that children are only in their first term at school, most have settled quickly into school life and understand classroom expectations. Most children behave well and, despite their limited experience of school, listen attentively to their teacher and fellow classmates.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. Children are challenged in mathematics and are already developing their reasoning skills. They use mathematical equipment well to help strengthen their understanding of number and solve problems.
- The curriculum includes opportunities to deepen children's understanding and be creative. Children created wonderful 'land art' using natural resources from the school grounds. They also carefully constructed hedgehogs from clay and added spines using sticks.
- Teachers plan activities that entice children into developing a love of reading. In learning about prediction, children completed the 'barefoot challenge' where they walked through different materials, including mud, squashed pumpkins and ice, and described their feelings as part of their focus on the book 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt'.
- Children develop their speaking and listening skills well because of good teaching and modelling of language by adults. This is supported by imaginative play opportunities using appropriate resources. For example, one group worked together using a range of tools and pretended to dig up a road to make repairs. Children engaged freely in conversation about the pretend job they were undertaking.
- In the classroom, teachers plan engaging activities that support children's development in the different areas of learning and provide a variety of choice. However, the outdoor learning environment is more limited due to fewer resources. This means that, sometimes, children do not experience the same quality of rich learning opportunities as in the classroom. Leaders already have plans in place to address this issue.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the early years follow the same robust measures as the rest of the school. Children are kept safe and any risks are minimised. All statutory welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	124158
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10037885

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Lisa Baker
Executive Headteacher	Mrs Kelly Williams
Telephone number	01827 213 885
Website	www.wilnecotejnrandheathfieldsinf.co.uk
Email address	headteacher@hiwj.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements on the publication of information on its website.
- This school is an average-sized infant school.
- Almost all pupils are White British. A very low, although increasing, proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs, an education, health and care plan or through special educational needs support is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed lessons across the school, most of which were joint observations with senior leaders. Inspectors reviewed a wide range of pupils' work across most subject areas.
- Inspectors interviewed pupils and spoke to them during lessons and at other times to gather their opinions about school and learning.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, the deputy headteachers and a range of other leaders. The lead inspector met with 18 school staff, including teachers and support and administrative staff, to gather their views on leadership, safeguarding and pupils' behaviour. The lead inspector held a short telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- An inspector met with three governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Responses from 50 parents and carers to the Ofsted online questionnaire (Parent View) and 35 free-text responses from parents were analysed. An inspector also gathered the views of parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to pupils about their interest in books.
- Inspectors considered 25 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspection team took into account a wide range of information, including the school's website, school development plan, attendance data, pupils' assessment information and leaders' monitoring of teaching and learning. Inspectors reviewed documentation relating to safeguarding, as well as governing body minutes and notes of visits from the local authority.

Inspection team

Tim Hill, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Hughes

Ofsted Inspector

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