

Hawbush Primary School

Hawbush Road, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 3NH

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

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	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there has been a decline in pupils' achievements. Too many pupils do not reach age-related expectations.
- Pupils do not make good progress from their starting points. As a result, standards in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 are too low.
- As a result of teaching that does not meet pupils' learning needs sufficiently well, many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- The teaching of writing is not effective. Teachers' expectations of the quality of work are not high enough. Handwriting is particularly weak.
- Until the current year, leaders and governors have not kept a close enough eye on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Consequently, the quality of teaching is inconsistent.
- The curriculum is limited and does not support the development of pupils' skills in a broad range of subjects.
- Over the past four years, the numbers of pupils leaving the early years with a good level of development have been well below average. This is now beginning to improve.
- Too many pupils do not attend school regularly enough. Levels of persistent absence are above average. This limits the progress these pupils can make.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. He leads with drive and determination. He has empowered other leaders and things are beginning to improve.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and standards are average. Disadvantaged pupils now achieve well in phonics.
- Progress in reading is improving. As a result, more pupils reached the standard expected at the end of key stage 2 in 2017.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They get along well with each other. They are proud of their school.
- Arrangements to keep pupils safe are effective. Robust systems and procedures are now in place. Parents say that their children are safe and well cared for at school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - all adults have high expectations of what pupils can do and achieve
 - teachers plan a cohesive sequence of learning which builds on pupils' prior knowledge and understanding
 - work set for pupils is not too hard or too easy and meets their differing needs
 - all adults routinely tackle pupils' basic errors and misconceptions so that they are not repeated
 - letter formation is taught consistently well so that the poor level of handwriting of many pupils is addressed as a matter of urgency.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - stabilising and further developing the role of the new senior leaders so that they have a greater impact in driving improvements across the school
 - reviewing and revising the development plan so that it is focused more carefully on the key priorities for the school in order to improve outcomes for pupils
 - developing a curriculum which engages pupils and enables them to develop their skills across a broad range of subjects
 - further developing the role of governors so that they hold leaders stringently to account and carry out all of their statutory functions effectively.
- Raise the achievement of pupils by ensuring that:
 - outcomes in writing and mathematics improve so that they are closer to national averages
 - rates of progress increase so that more pupils reach age-related standards.
- Improve the provision in the early years by:
 - further developing learning in the outdoor area so that children are appropriately challenged
 - ensuring that all adults make the most of every opportunity to challenge and extend children's thinking and reasoning.
- Continue to work with parents so that attendance levels rise and fewer pupils are persistently absent.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The new headteacher is ambitious for the school. He is resolute that no pupil will fail. A new school vision has been created: 'Living our dreams and being exceptional.' This is beginning to be seen in action.
- Since his appointment in September 2017, the headteacher has empowered other leaders, including governors. Despite several senior leadership roles currently being temporary, clear roles and areas of responsibility have been established. The headteacher has actively sought external advice and expertise from a local teaching school and the local authority to support his drive for improvement. Leaders at all levels are now playing a bigger part in driving improvements, but the work of new leaders is not yet fully embedded in practice.
- Leaders know the strengths of the school and the areas that need improving. These are reflected in the current school development plan. However, leaders have not yet clearly established the key priorities. Concise measures of success and realistic timescales are not identified for each area. Consequently, plans are overly long and there is a danger of overload.
- The headteacher has begun to bring about improvements to teaching. He has introduced a robust cycle of performance management. Working with senior leaders, he is providing support and guidance to improve teaching. New policies and procedures are being implemented, but consistently good teaching is not yet secure across the school.
- Leaders are working hard to ensure a consistent approach across the school. The headteacher has introduced a rigorous approach to monitoring. This includes regular opportunities to observe teaching and look at pupils' books. The high standards expected are discussed with individual teachers. Middle leaders provide support and coaching. It is too early to see the full impact of this monitoring because there are still inconsistencies in provision across the school.
- The curriculum is limited and requires improvement. The English curriculum has been reviewed and revised. The introduction of a 'novel-led' approach is engaging pupils of all abilities. However, pupils' books show little evidence of work completed in subjects other than English. For example, the teaching of subjects such as science is patchy. As a result, pupils do not fully develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developing. The introduction of the new school values – aspiration, hope, fairness, resilience, respect and perseverance – is helping pupils reflect on their own attitudes and abilities. Pupils' knowledge of fundamental British values is limited at present. Pupils understand democracy and link this to voting for school council members. However, the understanding of other cultures, for example, is less well developed.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is effective. The leader for this area is having a greater impact since the arrival of the new headteacher. Pupils' needs are carefully assessed. Additional funding is used to

provide appropriate support. Pupils' progress is tracked and the leader monitors the impact of the support carefully.

- Leaders identify barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Additional funding is used to provide support for learning as well as for residential visits and trips. Progress for many of the pupils in this group is good but not yet consistently so across the school.
- Specific funds for school physical education and sport are put to good use. Staff, including a qualified sports coach, encourage pupils to be more active. Pupils benefit from participating in local sporting competitions such as rounders and benchball. A link governor has recently been identified to oversee the use of these funds and is beginning to monitor the impact of this funding.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school. They say that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. Several parents who spoke to the inspection team commented on the positive changes since the arrival of the new headteacher. One parent summed up the views of many by saying: 'Since the new headteacher has taken over, I have noticed many positive changes have taken place around the school. My child seems to be happier than ever. Thank you Hawbush.'

Governance of the school

- Governors are passionate about the school. They share the vision of the new headteacher and want all pupils to do well. In the past, governors did not always have a strategic view of the school. This is now better. Governors are beginning to ask more pertinent questions and undertake focused school visits. As a result, they have a clear view of the main issues facing the school. They know that the priority is to improve teaching, learning and assessment in order to improve pupils' progress and attainment.
- Since September 2017, governors have reviewed a number of key policies and procedures. They now have systems in place to deal with issues as they arise. Each governor has an allocated area of responsibility. Governors are beginning to monitor the use of additional funding and its impact more regularly.
- Governors understand their responsibilities for keeping children safe at school. They have a good knowledge and awareness of safeguarding issues including keeping children safe online. They monitor school procedures and ensure that the statutory checks are carried out when recruiting new staff. Governors attend training to make sure that their knowledge is up to date.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The new headteacher is tenacious in his approach to keeping children safe. The designated safeguarding leaders are similarly determined. The headteacher has rapidly addressed weaknesses in the systems and procedures. Visitors to school are checked and risk assessments are reviewed regularly. Detailed and accurate records are kept and any concern about a child is followed up quickly. Timely action is taken to support vulnerable children and their families.

- Staff access regular training, including on the 'Prevent' duty and child sexual exploitation. The designated safeguarding leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of local issues. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are effective. The single central record is well managed and regularly checked by senior leaders including governors.
- A new personal, social and health education scheme has recently been introduced. It provides more opportunities for pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time has not been good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress and achieve the standards they are capable of reaching.
- In the past, expectations of what pupils could achieve were too low. Particular weaknesses in the teaching of writing and mathematics led to low achievement for many pupils by the end of key stages 1 and 2. As a consequence, there are now gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding. The new headteacher and his senior team have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- The standard of teaching is still variable across the school. Senior leaders have an accurate view of teaching and are clear about where improvements are needed. Coaching and support are provided to help teachers improve their teaching with the aim of it being good in every class. While teaching is improving, the improvements are not yet embedded in practice or consistent across the school.
- Too often the learning sequences planned do not build systematically on what pupils can already do. The pitch of work is not well matched to pupils' different needs. Sometimes work is too challenging and pupils cannot complete it without adult support. At other times, pupils repeat work they can already do. Leaders are providing training for staff in order to improve teachers' planning.
- The teaching of mathematics varies from class to class. Some teachers model and explain clearly what the tasks are about so that pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 3 class, pupils successfully interpreted graphs because the teacher had showed them what to do first. Not all teachers explain clearly, although this is beginning to improve.
- Expectations for the standards of writing across the school are not high enough. Simple mistakes in spelling and punctuation are not routinely picked up. Pupils are not helped to develop their handwriting regularly enough. As a result, a large majority of pupils have poorly developed writing skills. This limits their ability to write quickly, neatly and fluently.
- The newly introduced 'novel-led' approach to learning is helping to improve writing across the school. The choice of a high-quality, interesting text engages pupils' interest. For example, boys talked enthusiastically about reading 'Tom's Midnight Garden'. They wanted to write about the story. As a result, writing in some classes is beginning to improve.

- The teaching of reading is effective. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge to read unfamiliar words. By the end of key stage 2, pupils read fluently and confidently. They use expression to bring their reading alive. Pupils can say which books they like and why. Pupils say they enjoy reading.
- Positive relationships are evident in classrooms. During the inspection, pupils were observed collaborating and taking turns to solve a mathematical problem. Pupils are happy to work together and support each other effectively.
- Additional adults are used effectively across the school. They provide appropriate support particularly to pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They encourage pupils to do their best.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Although the majority of pupils try hard and concentrate in their lessons, many are unable to do this independently. They have limited strategies to cope if they find their work too challenging or when they finish it quickly. Adults across the school are working hard to help pupils develop greater independence.
- The majority of pupils do not take pride in their work. This is a result of low expectations from adults.
- Pupils understand the different forms of bullying. Pupils talked about the 'Bullying box' and how issues are dealt with in school. They are confident that adults would help them deal with any problems they may have.
- Pupils have a secure understanding about how to keep themselves safe including online. Older pupils acknowledge that there can be problems with some of the social media apps they use. They know not to share personal information and to tell an adult if they are worried.
- The school actively promotes healthy lifestyles. Focused cookery weeks provide positive opportunities for pupils to cook together. They enjoy sharing what they have made. Pupils know what foods are healthy to eat although many of them still bring unhealthy snacks for breaktime.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and leadership roles across the school. Year 6 pupils help Reception children after lunch by taking them safely back to the early years. A boy explained how he volunteers to look after and fill the water bottles. Pupils are responsible and many older pupils are beginning to show initiative.
- Pupils who have complex needs are well supported in school. The recent development of nurture provision is helping these pupils cope with the daily demands of school life.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. This is because leaders have not been successful in reducing overall and persistent absence. Leaders do everything they can to try to improve attendance. They systematically use strategies such as first-day calling, home visits and fines to follow up any absence. However, the unauthorised and extended leave of a few pupils continues to prevent attendance rates from rising further.
- In the main, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they enjoy coming to school. During the inspection, they were keen to talk to the inspectors about their work. However, a few pupils in some classes become disengaged when teaching does not challenge them or meet their needs.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They are friendly and helpful to visitors. They hold doors open and could be heard saying 'Please' and 'Thank you'. They are proud of their school and say they wouldn't change anything about it.
- Pupils know how to conduct themselves in and around school. They are calm and walk sensibly around the school building. Most pupils cooperate well with each other during lessons and at breaktimes. Pupils respond quickly to adult instructions.
- The behaviour policy has been revised and pupils say they like the new approach. They understand the school rules and know what is expected. Staff apply the policy consistently.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over the last two years, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 have made slow progress and their attainment has not been high enough. Standards have been below those expected nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics. The school ranks in the bottom 20% of all schools nationally for progress in writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' progress varies across the school and, as a result, many pupils do not achieve the levels of which they are capable. The books of current pupils show that not enough pupils are making accelerated progress. This is a result of low expectations from leaders and teachers over time. The new headteacher has set ambitious new targets to address this situation. A new assessment system introduced in September 2017 tracks pupils' progress carefully. Meetings are held with staff, and expectations are made clear. It is too early for the full impact of this approach to be realised.
- Boys make slower progress than girls, especially in reading and writing, and consequently they reach lower standards. These gaps in attainment are not yet closing.
- Progress and attainment in reading are improving. By the end of key stage 2 in 2017, pupils' progress was similar to that of those in most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard was similar to that nationally. More pupils reached greater depth in reading than previously.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been in line with national standards for the last two years.

- Disadvantaged pupils make better progress than their peers in many year groups. At the end of key stage 2 in 2017, disadvantaged pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics was stronger than that of their peers although still below that of others nationally.
- The achievement of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities varies considerably across the school. Some pupils have complex additional needs. Despite their barriers to learning, many of them make steady progress as a result of the support they receive. Pupils with more moderate learning difficulties make good progress. They respond well to the support they receive in one-to-one or small-group situations.
- Pupils' variable learning in a range of other subjects reflects the inconsistencies in teaching and learning over time and between subjects.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children enter the early years with skills and abilities which are well below those typical for their age. Many children have limited speech and communication skills. Over time, the progress they have made has not been good enough to prepare them fully for the demands of Year 1.
- Over the past four years, the majority of children have not reached a good level of development by the time they leave Reception. This is now improving. Currently, 50% of children are at the expected level. This is higher than in previous years but is still below the national average.
- The range and quality of activities that children access vary. Not all adults are clear about what children can do. Some activities lack a clear purpose and do not build on prior learning. As a result, children do not fully develop their skills, knowledge and understanding across the areas of learning.
- Adults interact with children and know when to intervene. Many adults ask questions which stimulate the children's thinking. They encourage children to find solutions to problems. For example, when writing a letter to Handa, the children worked out how to fold the paper to fit inside their chosen envelope. However, the quality of well-timed interventions is not yet consistent across the early years.
- The indoor learning environment is stimulating and enables children to be independent. Children choose from a range of equipment and activities linked to their current learning. On the other hand, learning opportunities outside are more limited and often lack purpose. Adults supervise children rather than engage them in learning through play. This slows children's progress.
- Leadership of the early years is strong. The new leader of the early years has a clear understanding of the areas in need of improvement. She has a comprehensive improvement plan in place and is taking the appropriate action to make a difference. She has introduced several initiatives, such as a new approach to the teaching of phonics. There is evidence of improved outcomes for pupils now.
- Relationships across the early years are positive. Children like playing together and take turns and share. Adults are positive role models for the children. Routines are well established and children know what is expected. Behaviour is managed well.

- Children are safe and well cared for in the early years. There are a suitable number of paediatric first-aiders. Leaders ensure that statutory welfare requirements are met. Parents are positive about their children's experience in the early years.

School details

Unique reference number	103820
Local authority	Dudley
Inspection number	10042892

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 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Parkes
Headteacher	Rob McConomy
Telephone number	01384 816 930
Website	www.hawbush.dudley.sch.uk
Email address	data@hawbush.dudley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2013

Information about this school

- Hawbush is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is significantly above average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is significantly above average. The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- A new headteacher was appointed to the school in September 2017. The deputy headteacher is currently absent from school. This role is being covered by two substantive assistant headteachers. Two middle leaders have stepped up temporarily to cover the assistant headteachers' roles.

- The school is currently involved in an early years project through the Hales Valley Teaching School.
- In 2017, the school met the current government floor standards.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with four members of the governing body including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. The lead inspector discussed the school with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were with the headteacher or other senior leaders.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector to discuss a range of issues. They accompanied the inspector on a learning walk around the school. Pupils read to the inspector. The inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- An inspector talked to parents before school. The lead inspector also considered the 19 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and 18 responses to the free-text service.
- The inspector considered 18 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised including the school's self-evaluation and development plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and an inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wayne Simner

Ofsted Inspector

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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.

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