

Highters Heath Community School

Highters Heath Lane, Kings Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 4LY

Inspection dates

13–14 March 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	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good throughout school. This is resulting in pupils making variable rates of progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not making consistently fast progress in reading and mathematics.
- Learning tasks are not always matched well to the needs of individual pupils. As a result, the speed of learning is sometimes too slow and the most able pupils are not consistently well challenged.
- Opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning when solving problems in mathematics are not consistently effective.
- The recently introduced changes to the teaching of reading have so far not accelerated pupils' progress rapidly enough.
- Pupils' presentation in many books is shoddy. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work are not consistently high.
- Pupils are given too few opportunities to use their mathematical skills in other subjects.
- A few teachers do not consistently apply the marking and assessment policy accurately.
- Monitoring of teaching and learning lacks sufficient rigour and precision.
- Governors have an overgenerous view of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. They do not hold senior leaders well enough to account for pupils' underperformance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils' achievement in writing improved well in 2017 because weaknesses have been tackled securely. Key stage 2 attainment is rising.
- The early years is effectively led. Children are making fast progress in their learning in the Reception class.
- Younger pupils are taught to read effectively.
- Pupils behave well. Their personal welfare needs are well catered for by the school.
- In 2017, disadvantaged pupils' attainment in the phonics screening check was higher than other pupils' in school.
- A secure culture of safeguarding permeates school life to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- The curriculum is diverse and rich.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching to improve pupils' achievement in reading and mathematics by:
 - increasing rates of progress made by disadvantaged and most-able pupils
 - more carefully matching learning tasks to pupils' needs and accelerating the pace of learning so that pupils, particularly the most able, are challenged effectively in lessons
 - providing effective opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning when solving problems in mathematics
 - extending pupils' use of mathematics in other subjects
 - fully embedding the new approach to reading to ensure faster improvement in pupils' reading skills
 - strengthening the accuracy of assessment
 - ensuring that teachers' expectations are consistently high in relation to the work pupils present in their books.
- Strengthen the impact leaders and managers have on pupils' achievement by:
 - eliminating inconsistencies which remain in the quality of teaching
 - strengthening the precision and rigour of monitoring
 - using pupil premium more effectively to accelerate disadvantaged pupils' progress
 - making sure that the school's assessment and marking policy is applied accurately and consistently by all staff
 - ensuring that governors have a much more realistic understanding of the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement so that they can robustly hold senior leaders to account for underperformance.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders have not successfully tackled the remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. This is resulting in groups of pupils, such as the most able and the disadvantaged, making variable rates of progress in their learning, particularly in reading and mathematics. The latest school performance information and work in pupils' books show that variations remain in rates of progress.
- Monitoring carried out by senior leaders to check on how well teaching and learning are improving is not sharply enough focused on the progress groups of pupils are making in their learning. Scrutiny of books and planning lacks precision.
- The spending of additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is not consistently having sufficient impact on their achievement, particularly in mathematics and reading in all year groups.
- At the time of the previous inspection, leaders and managers, including governors, were asked to improve presentation in pupils' books and increase the use of mathematics in other subjects. So far this has not been tackled successfully.
- Leaders and managers have not ensured that the agreed school marking and assessment policy is applied consistently.
- The school has recently been well supported and effectively challenged by the Birmingham Education Partnership. School leaders failed to act sufficiently rapidly on the advice they received to improve the school.
- Improvements have been made to the quality of teaching of writing in school. As a result, pupils in key stage 2 made sufficient progress in writing in 2017.
- The curriculum is rich and diverse. It is a real strength in school and supports children well in their learning, particularly in their writing. Many visits take place, which stimulate pupils' interests. For example, one group of younger pupils were observed successfully learning about the features of canals after a trip to Brindley Place in Birmingham.
- High-quality coaching, training and support are provided for staff, which is helping them to successfully improve their teaching.
- Pupils are taught effectively to respect others and to value diversity. This prepares them well for living in modern Britain.
- Sports premium funding for pupils is spent carefully to provide a wide and exciting range of additional clubs for pupils to attend.
- The breakfast club is effectively run by the school. Pupils grow in confidence and are happy to ask for their own specific favourites, such as burnt toast.

Governance of the school

- Governors meet regularly to receive a mass of information on how well the school is performing. Because they do not have a sufficiently secure understanding of the

effectiveness of the quality of teaching and learning and of pupils' achievement, they do not challenge senior leaders enough about pupils' underperformance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. A secure culture of safeguarding runs through all aspects of school life. Regular training is undertaken by all staff to ensure that they have an up-to-date knowledge of their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe.
- Governors also undertake regular safeguarding training. The chair of the governing body takes responsibility for safeguarding in school. She visits school regularly to check that secure and robust processes are in place to safeguard children. Senior staff work with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is not consistently good across school. Pupils' books and the latest school performance information show that the quality of teaching varies between different year groups.
- The most able pupils are not challenged enough by the learning tasks they are asked to complete. Many of these tasks are too easy and do not build on what pupils already know. The most able pupils are capable of so much more in lessons, but this is not recognised by teachers because their use of assessment is not sufficiently accurate.
- Learning tasks are not consistently well matched to pupils' learning needs or abilities, which slows the pace of learning for pupils in lessons.
- Opportunities for pupils to explain reasoning behind the solving of problems in mathematics are not always delivered in a suitably challenging manner to maximise learning.
- In too many classes, pupils present their work in a scruffy and untidy manner. Teachers in many classes accept this as the norm instead of having higher expectations of their pupils.
- Many changes have been made to the teaching of reading since September 2017. Pupils are now learning skills such as comparison, deduction and inference well in lessons. Pupils now support each other in their reading in newly introduced lessons which take place daily. This is beginning to improve pupils' progress, but will take additional time to embed fully.
- Teaching assistants are deployed effectively in lessons to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. This is helping these pupils to learn well and make progress.
- Philosophy for learning lessons are effectively supporting learning in a wide range of subjects, such as reading and writing. Pupils are learning transferable skills well.
- Younger pupils are taught to read well. The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 and the early years is fast-paced and supports the development of reading skills effectively.

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 a wide knowledge of how to keep themselves safe because they are taught these skills effectively in school. Pupils are particularly well taught about how to stay safe when using the internet.
- Many opportunities to take on additional responsibilities are provided for pupils. These responsibilities must be applied for and interviews attended. If successful, pupils are paid in tokens which can be exchanged for treats. This aims to replicate the world of work for pupils.
- Pupils report that bullying is rare. When it does occur, pupils report confidently that they know what to do immediately. Adults are said to be good, and even very good, at resolving difficulties.
- In too many year groups, pupils are not taking enough pride in the presentation of their work.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Around school, pupils behave well. They are polite and well mannered.
- On the playground, pupils play harmoniously. There is a wealth of equipment available for pupils to access at lunchtime and breaktimes while they run off steam.
- School leaders have successfully reduced the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school.
- Pupils enjoy attending school regularly. Their attendance is above average. School leaders adopt a zero-tolerance approach to term-time holidays, which is helping families to understand the importance of attending school regularly to gain a good education.
- Exclusions are used appropriately. In the rare circumstances when these occur, high levels of support are provided.
- Very occasionally a little low-level disruption among boys occurs, but this is dealt with effectively by staff.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2016 and 2017, too few pupils made sufficient progress in mathematics and reading by the end of Year 6. This was particularly among the most able pupils and those who were disadvantaged.
- Not all pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make as much progress as they could in their learning.
- Attainment has been below average at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and

mathematics for two years. However, attainment in these areas improved in 2017. For example, the proportion of pupils at the expected standard in writing was close to the national average.

- Pupils' books and observations in lessons show that pupils' progress is beginning to accelerate in mathematics. The introduction of pupils supporting each other in reading is accelerating pupils' progress. This means that more pupils are on track to reach age-related expectations at the end of this school year, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Reading is now well taught. Last year, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check was in line with the national average. More disadvantaged pupils in school reached the expected standard than other pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a flying start in the Reception class.
- Leadership of early years provision is effective. This is resulting in children who join the school with knowledge and skills that are typically below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language, making fast progress in their learning.
- The proportion of children reaching a good level of development at the end of Reception is about average. This means that most children are well prepared to join Year 1.
- Children behave well and enjoy socialising with each other while they take turns to have a go at the well-designed learning and development opportunities provided for them by school staff.
- The classroom is a well-ordered and calm place for little children to learn.
- All required safeguarding and child protection processes to keep children safe are in place.
- The indoor and outdoor learning areas are exciting and fun places for little children to learn while they are kept safe.
- Children are well settled and interested in learning because routines are well established.
- The quality of teaching is effective. Children of all abilities are well challenged. This is reflected in children's work and in their books.
- Children report that they are pleased that teachers visit them at home before they join school to get to know them. One child particularly liked the storybook they were given during a home visit to support their transition into the Reception class.
- Occasionally, regular assessment by teachers in lessons could be used more effectively to move children forward in their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	103365
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10042888

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	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Susan Richards
Headteacher	Hazel Colgan
Telephone number	0121 464 2459
Website	www.hightersheath.co.uk/
Email address	office@hightersheath.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 January 2014

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The school does not meet the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Early years provision is full time in the Reception class.
- The school runs a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, school staff, the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, together with five of their fellow governors. The lead inspector also met with a representative of the Birmingham Education Partnership.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. They also spoke briefly with parents and carers at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a few pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress pupils are currently making in school.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Too few responses to Parent View meant that no analysis was available. Inspectors considered the three free-text responses from parents, the 26 responses to the pupil questionnaire and the 12 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Malam	Ofsted Inspector

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