

Highwood Primary School

Fairwater Drive, Woodley, Reading, Berkshire RG5 3JE

Inspection dates

14–15 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

- Many pupils in key stage 2 do not make strong enough progress in their writing and mathematics. This is because teachers do not always have the highest expectations. They do not challenge pupils well enough to deepen their understanding.
- The assessment system is not effective. Teachers do not use it well enough to plan learning that builds on what pupils already know.
- School improvement documentation does not provide clear enough guidance on how to tackle the school's weaknesses.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning in Year 3 are not always positive.
- Some middle leaders are unsure about their roles and responsibilities. They do not have a great enough impact on the areas for which they are responsible.
- Teachers are not held effectively to account for the progress that pupils are making in their class.
- Governors are not given enough information about pupils' progress. For example, they do not know the proportion of pupils who are working at a higher level. They do not know the proportion of pupils who are making strong progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have had a positive impact on the good quality of education in the early years, key stage 1 and the resourced provision. They have worked hard to create a vibrant curriculum.
- There are strong relationships with parents and carers. Nearly all who answered the Ofsted survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to another parent.
- Children make good progress in the early years. A greater proportion than the national average reach a good level of development.
- Pupils who attend the resourced provision for speech and language make good progress from their starting points. Many acquire strong verbal skills.
- Behaviour in most classes is good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in key stage 2 in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - teachers make the best use of information about pupils' performance to plan learning activities that consistently build on what pupils already know
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to write at length and refine their skills in spelling, punctuation and composition
 - pupils are well supported to problem-solve and explain their reasoning in mathematics
 - teachers have high expectations and challenge pupils, including the most able, so that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards is in line with other schools nationally.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - pupils' attitudes to their learning in Year 3 improve
 - middle leaders have clear roles and responsibilities and a greater impact on the areas for which they are responsible
 - the school's assessment system is used effectively to show how pupils, including different groups of pupils, are progressing in each year group
 - teachers are more rigorously held to account for the progress that pupils are making
 - the school improvement plan provides more guidance on the actions needed to tackle weaknesses
 - governors are given information about the proportion of pupils who are working at a higher level and making greater progress.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not secured consistently good teaching in key stage 2. One of the reasons for this is that they have not held teachers rigorously to account for the progress that pupils are making. This has resulted in pupils making inconsistent progress in writing and mathematics.
- Middle leaders are not always able to demonstrate their impact because they do not have clear enough roles and responsibilities. Some subjects, such as writing and mathematics, are not sufficiently monitored.
- School improvement documentation does not provide enough guidance on how to address weaknesses. For example, leaders rightly identified that progress in mathematics needed to be improved. However, the actions identified on how to bring about this improvement are imprecise.
- Leadership has introduced an assessment system which has generated a large amount of data. It is not effective as it lacks clarity about how different groups of pupils, such as the most able, are progressing in the different year groups. The effectiveness of the system is further limited because staff, particularly in key stage 2, make little use of all the information that is provided.
- The school is a warm and welcoming environment. All parents who responded to the Ofsted survey said that their children were happy. They praise the leadership of the school. A typical comment by a parent was 'The headteacher is incredibly approachable and truly cares about every person in the school, from children to the employees.' The before- and after-school clubs are well attended. They enable pupils to relax and play games with their friends at the start and end of each day.
- The headteacher has implemented effective changes to ensure that those in the early years, key stage 1 and the resourced provision receive a good quality of education. Recently, he has been making sure that the construction of the new school building runs smoothly.
- Staff, including those new to their roles this academic year, are committed. They recognise that improvements need to be made and have taken on board the comments and suggestions made by the local authority. One example of the improvements already made is the expenditure of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Attendance has risen since 2016 and is now in line with national averages.
- Leaders provide a vibrant curriculum that develops effective learning behaviours. For example, a display in the classroom in Year 4 showed how pupils had reflected about the impact of the aeroplane on the modern world. Pupils are curious about other cultures and countries. Those in Year 2 had discovered interesting facts about the Indian subcontinent. History skills are well developed. For example, pupils learned about the ancient Egyptians by creating an Egyptian tomb. Pupils have also been involved in making history. They recently buried a time capsule in the school grounds which contained information about their daily school life.
- Parents of pupils who attend the speech and language resourced provision are delighted with the care and quality of support that their children receive. There are

very effective links with speech and language therapists.

- The school rightly prides itself on providing a large range of extra-curricular activities. Lunchtimes at Highwood consist of pupils enjoying Zumba sessions or having 'a knit and a natter'. Sports are a large feature of the school and include gymnastics, netball, football and tag rugby. The additional physical education and sport premium funding is well used to ensure that all pupils, whatever their level of ability, take part in a sport.
- British values, such as democracy and the rule of law, are well taught. Pupils all get on well together. They value the diversity of their different backgrounds and respect each other's faiths and beliefs. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Governors are proactive. They requested a visit by the local authority last term to check that pupils across the school were making good progress.
- Governors have a good understanding of some of the areas that need to be improved. They also recognise that the school has many strengths. Each governor has a specific area of responsibility. They produce comprehensive reports about many aspects of the school. For example, an early years report accurately identified the many strengths of the provision.
- Governors have not been given enough information about the proportion of pupils who are working at a higher level or those who are making greater progress. This hinders their ability to fully hold the school to account.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff and governors are diligent in ensuring that pupils at this school are safe. Every parent who answered the Ofsted questionnaire considered that their children are well cared for.
- Parents like the fact that the school keeps them regularly informed about safeguarding and this helps them to reinforce key messages at home. For example, pupils know that they must not talk to strangers because both the school and their parents tell them that it is not safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching in key stage 2 is too variable to secure good progress, particularly in writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations are not high enough. This means that some pupils, including the most able, are not challenged sufficiently to make strong progress in their learning.
- Teachers are not always using information about pupils' performance to plan activities that build on what pupils already know. This means that some pupils, particularly in key stage 2, get tasks that are either too easy or too difficult.
- English books in key stage 2 show that pupils rarely write at length. Often, pupils do

not get enough chances to refine their skills in spelling, punctuation and composition.

- Mathematical skills in key stage 2 are inconsistently developed. This is because teachers do not support pupils well enough to apply their knowledge. For example, there is little evidence of pupils explaining their reasoning when solving mathematical problems.
- Pupils who attend the speech and language resource base are well taught. Teachers have considerable skills in developing pupils' communication skills. They work effectively with speech and language therapists. Together, they decide on the right strategies that will best help each pupil.
- Effective teaching in key stage 1 enables pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to plan interesting lessons. One example of this was seen in a Year 1 phonics lesson where pupils made strong gains in their learning.
- Teaching assistants help move learning forward. They skilfully assist pupils to complete the tasks they have been given.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Parents say that their children become more self-confident because of the support from teachers. As a result, some pupils have achieved considerable successes in areas such as sport and drama.
- In all year groups, leaders ensure that the pupils start to develop learning behaviours that will help them to be successful lifelong learners.
- Pupils say that the school is 'great'. They like the fact that their teachers always help them whenever they are stuck.
- Pupils know how to stay safe and can explain, for example, how to stay safe when using the internet. Pupils know about keeping healthy and understand the dangers of having too much sugar in their diet. Pupils like the fact that staff often share their own fitness regimes.
- Pupils say that bullying is not an issue at the school. They are very aware that bullying can take different forms, such as physical bullying or racial bullying. Pupils say that if ever they had a concern they would tell a teacher.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Almost all pupils behave well around the school. They are polite and caring towards others and show responsible attitudes in the playground.
- In every class except Year 3, pupils have positive attitudes to their learning. They are attentive and respond quickly to teachers' guidance.
- In Year 3, behaviour for learning is not so positive. Pupils do not always listen to the

teacher. Low-level disruption sometimes affects the learning of others. Leaders have put in place additional support to ensure that pupils' behaviour improves. However, so far this has had a limited impact.

- Attendance is now in line with national averages for all groups of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Writing and mathematics progress in key stage 2 is inconsistent. In 2017, progress in mathematics was significantly below national averages and in the bottom 10% when compared to other schools. Work in current pupils' books shows that progress in both writing and mathematics remains too variable.
- In 2017 in key stage 2, a lower-than-average proportion of pupils reached the highest standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Work in books shows that pupils, particularly the most able, are not sufficiently challenged in their learning. Few are currently on track to reach the higher standards.
- Pupils achieve better in key stage 1. In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching age-related expectations was broadly similar to the national average. Work in books shows that current pupils are also on track to attain standards that are similar to the national average.
- There are no significant differences in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils. This includes pupils new to the school, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils make stronger progress in developing their reading skills. Attainment in reading at the end of key stages 1 and 2 was similar to age-related expectations in 2017. The results of the phonics screening check in both Years 1 and 2 have steadily risen over the last three years. They were above the national average in 2017. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are developing a good understanding of letters and how to blend sounds to make words.
- In science, pupils have made strong progress. Those in Year 2 have developed a good understanding of habitats. Pupils have made good progress in developing their French skills. For example, pupils in Year 6 are able to converse in simple sentences.
- Pupils in the resourced provision develop effective speaking and listening skills. Staff in lessons regularly encourage oral communication. Pupils respond readily and talk both to teachers and to other pupils. Parents said that they were pleased with the provision, with one commenting, 'Teachers are so supportive, and because of this, my child's progress has been far better than initially predicted.'

Early years provision

Good

- From starting points that are typical for their age, both into the Nursery and the Reception classes, children make good progress. By the end of Reception, a greater proportion of children, when compared to the national average, reach a good level of development. Children therefore have a good start to their learning and are well

prepared for Year 1.

- Leadership in the early years is strong. The provision has introduced its own system of tracking children's progress that is separate from the rest of the school. The system is well used by staff to plan learning for children that builds on their existing knowledge.
- Children behave well. They carefully share resources, such as paper and colouring pencils. During lessons, they sit and listen quietly to the teacher.
- Teachers provide many fun and stimulating activities. They make good use of the small forest area to show children the diversity of living things. During the inspection, children were fascinated by some frogspawn. They enjoyed finding out that the magnifying glass made it much easier to see the developing tadpoles.
- The colourful separate outside areas for the Nursery and Reception children are well resourced and provide opportunities for children to develop all the areas of learning.
- Parents are delighted with the early years provision. They say that staff are friendly and are always available to discuss any issues or concerns.

School details

Unique reference number	131689
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	10040716

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	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Keith Wilson
Headteacher	Matthew Hickey
Telephone number	01189 265 493
Website	www.highwood.wokingham.sch.uk
Email address	admin@highwood.wokingham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2014

Information about this school

- Highwood Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's early years provision consists of two Nursery and two Reception classes.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is similar to the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average.
- The school has a specialist resource base for children with speech and language impairment. It has 24 places for primary-aged pupils. All pupils who attend the provision have an education, health and care plan.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school clubs.
- There is a high degree of pupil mobility in some year groups. Nearly half of the pupils in the current Year 5 have joined in the last two years.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors and senior leaders observed learning in 18 lessons. In addition, a number of shorter visits were made to check on aspects such as the learning and progress of most able pupils. Inspectors conducted a detailed scrutiny of pupils' work across all year groups.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at this school. Some pupils in Years 2 and 6 read to inspectors.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, staff and governors. There was a telephone conversation with the local authority.
- The views of 49 parents who responded to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, were considered. Inspectors gathered the views of 15 parents who were meeting their children at the school gate.
- Inspectors considered the 24 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- A range of documentation was examined, including the school's development plan and its self-evaluation. Policies and records related to safeguarding, and information about pupils' behaviour, progress and attendance, were checked.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Barbara Carr	Ofsted Inspector
Kusum Trikha	Ofsted Inspector

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