

Higher Openshaw Community School

Saunton Road, Higher Openshaw, Manchester M11 1AJ

Inspection dates

9–10 May 2018

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

- The headteacher, supported by governors, senior and middle leaders, has put in place clear plans for success. Consequently, Higher Openshaw Community School continues to thrive.
- All staff are provided with excellent professional training and support. Staff morale is high, and this is reflected in the way staff work as a team to support pupils.
- The curriculum provides many opportunities for pupils to learn about interesting topics, subjects and issues. Most pupils benefit greatly from their outdoor and extra-curricular experiences.
- Pupils behave well, both inside and outside the classroom. They enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn.
- Pupils make great strides in their personal development. They are proud of their school and learn to be caring, confident individuals who show respect for others.
- The early years provision is good. However, the learning environment lacks the richness needed to stimulate the highest quality of learning experiences.
- From their different starting points, overall, pupils make good progress across a range of subjects. However, although the school is working hard to improve mathematics teaching, pupils' progress in this subject is not as rapid.
- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and the quality of teaching and use of assessment are consistently good throughout the school.
- However, on occasion, teachers' expectations are not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. For some most-able pupils, work can be too easy and this limits their opportunities to reach the higher levels by the end of each key stage.
- Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They report that their children are happy, safe and make good progress.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They provide a good level of challenge and support to the headteacher in order to ensure that the school continues to move forward.
- Safeguarding is effective. There is a strong culture of safeguarding across the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more pupils, particularly the most able, achieve higher standards at the end of each key stage by raising teachers' expectations and setting more challenging targets for pupils' achievement.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills across all phases of the school.
- Develop the indoor and outdoor environment in early years to provide more stimulating learning experiences for all children.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher, ably supported by senior leaders and governors, has established clear and ambitious plans for the school. Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders have pupils' best interests at the heart of all that the school does.
- Over the past two years, leaders have prioritised high-quality training and support for all staff. As a result, the provision for all pupils, and particularly for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, or who join the school new to, or at the early stages of learning English, is good.
- The school's investment in middle leadership development is paying dividends. Middle leaders are making a significant contribution to improving the school. They are passionate and knowledgeable about fulfilling their responsibilities. As a result, they are making a considerable positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils love learning. Leaders have devised a curriculum which inspires, enthuses and engages all pupils. Senior and middle leaders have worked together to plan topics that give pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to stand them in good stead for their next steps.
- Leaders keep a close eye on how well pupils are achieving. Frequent learning walks, lesson observations, checks on work in pupils' books, and pupil progress meetings help them to have an accurate view of pupils' performance. This accurate information on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics allows leaders to intervene swiftly when pupils fall behind. Leaders are now turning their attention to replicating this quality of information across other subjects, including history, geography and art.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers and support staff are proud to work at Higher Openshaw Community School. They are delighted with the improvements leaders have made and appreciate leaders' willingness to involve them in making plans for the school.
- The school's special educational needs and disabilities coordinator has transformed the quality of provision for those who have SEN and/or disabilities. Accurate identification, detailed assessment and tailored provision help these pupils to make strong progress from their varying starting points.
- New pupils and their families are given a warm welcome. The recently appointed English as an additional language (EAL) coordinator quickly establishes where pupils are in learning English. She puts in place a comprehensive programme of support so that these pupils get off to a flying start.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress, which is helping them catch up with their peers nationally. Leaders make good use of additional funding to help eligible pupils overcome their barriers to learning.
- The family support worker provides exemplary support to vulnerable pupils and their families. She has a detailed knowledge of all pupils, their families and the community. Her professional and caring manner helps to build trusting, honest and productive

relationships. She works collaboratively with a range of external agencies to provide the specialist help and support needed.

- The school is a hive of activity. Every day, school life brims with clubs, extra classes, trips out and visitors. These contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents are valued partners in their child's education. Parents talk about how welcome they feel in school. Teachers make time to talk to parents and the pastoral team is always on hand to help. Teachers provide workshops to help parents support their child's learning.
- School leaders are refreshingly honest in their assessment of the school. They are proud of what they have achieved so far, but recognise that, given the multitude of changes, more time is needed to see the full fruits of their labours.

Governance of the school

- Governors have stepped up to the mark. They are passionate about their school and share leaders' ambitious plans for improvement. They have given the new leadership team the mandate to put these plans into action.
- The governing body has the requisite skills, experience and expertise to provide effective strategic leadership. Governors have a detailed understanding of the school's performance and use this information to challenge and support leaders appropriately.
- Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities diligently. They make sure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is deployed effectively.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher has secured the school grounds and put in place procedures and revised policies to make sure that pupils are kept safe in school.
- Leaders carry out robust checks to make sure that all staff are suitable to work with children. Comprehensive training ensures that all staff understand how to keep pupils safe and carry out their roles and responsibilities assiduously. Record keeping is meticulous. The designated safeguarding lead follows up on any concerns thoroughly.
- Pupils are given a wealth of information to help them keep themselves safe both online and in the community. Any rare incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively by staff. Parents, staff and pupils agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is continually being developed and sharpened to ensure that lessons provide interesting activities, topics and themes that engage pupils well in their learning. Teachers benefit greatly from their training, support and opportunities to work together to plan and learn from each other. This contributes positively to pupils' good progress.
- Highly positive relationships exist between staff and pupils. This means that pupils,

including those who arrive at the school part-way through their primary education, feel secure and develop confidence in their learning.

- Teachers have strong subject knowledge and generally high expectations of their pupils. Pupils' English books show that good learning and progress take place and that teachers have high expectations about presentation and the completion of work.
- Assessment information is used effectively to plan activities that match pupils' needs, allowing most pupils to make good progress in their learning. However, at times, tasks do not stretch the most able pupils sufficiently to raise their achievement.
- Teachers ensure that activities are well planned and resourced. For example, a writing activity based on the theme of Victorian schools flowed smoothly for pupils in upper key stage 2, as they had ready access to the resources they needed to understand pupils' experiences of school during this period.
- Staff skilfully question pupils to encourage them to think more deeply about their learning. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 who were being prepared for their writing assessment were asked questions such as, 'How do you know it is right?'
- Teachers are skilled in encouraging pupils to cooperate and share their ideas to develop learning. For example, pupils in key stage 1 worked well together to discuss their knowledge and application of Roman numerals. However, in the same lesson, some opportunities were missed to challenge the most able pupils to deepen their knowledge. On occasion, activities, particularly for the most able, are not tailored closely enough to build on what pupils already know and can do.
- Teachers provide a range of activities to promote pupils' reading skills and love of books. A group of pupils explained in detail how their teachers encouraged reading and made sure that they had access to interesting books that are well matched to their reading stage.
- The teaching of mathematics across the school is improving and pupils are making better progress. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical reasoning and problem-solving tasks in their lessons.
- In early years, children use their knowledge of phonics to support their reading of new words. Phonics is taught well in key stage 1, helping pupils to build on the foundations laid in early years.
- Teaching assistants make an important contribution to the good progress pupils make. They have very positive relationships with all pupils and often use their good subject knowledge to support learning. Teaching assistants' support for pupils who arrive at the school from other countries and cannot speak English is strong.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- New pupils, whether joining in early years or further up the school, are quickly made to feel part of the school family. The school works very effectively to make sure that all

pupils settle in quickly.

- Leaders have put in place a wealth of provision tailored to the needs of their pupils. Many pupils who join the school have experienced trauma or interrupted education. The expertise of the pastoral team, coupled with the support of specialists, means that every child gets the support they need. For example, pupils who struggle to cope at lunchtime can enjoy a 'quiet lunch'.
- Promoting pupils' personal development is a golden thread that runs through the curriculum. Older pupils relish their responsibilities as playground buddies and prefects. Younger pupils follow the excellent role models set by adults and older pupils.
- The school takes its responsibilities for promoting healthy lifestyles very seriously. The new outdoor fitness area encourages pupils to take part in exercise. The lunchtime assistants remind pupils about healthy eating choices. Older pupils learn what makes for healthy relationships.
- This is a school at the heart of its community. Pupils are encouraged to take their responsibilities as good citizens seriously. This helps prepare them for life in modern Britain. Year 6 pupils spend time making improvements to their local area, for example, by litter-picking and cleaning up graffiti.
- The school invests heavily in developing pupils' interests, which they can take with them into adulthood. Pupils relish learning bushcraft in the forest school, representing the school in sports tournaments supported by City in the Community, and having their artwork displayed in the school's annual exhibition.
- The school instils a thirst for knowledge. Pupils are keen to share their learning with each other, their teachers and visitors. The classroom walls and corridors are filled with pupils' work. Pupils bristle with pride when showing their books.

Behaviour

- Pupils look smart in their uniform, listen carefully to their teachers and are quick to lend a hand. Pupils work and play well together. The school is calm and orderly during lessons, on the corridors and in the dining room.
- Pupils and staff are in no doubt about the high standards of behaviour that leaders expect. Teachers are quick to acknowledge good behaviour, provide gentle reminders when needed and put in place additional interventions for the few pupils who struggle to regulate their own conduct. However, on occasion, a small minority of pupils lose concentration. This happens when teachers plan lessons which fail to engage or challenge all groups of pupils.
- The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator works well with teachers to plan effective support for pupils who have additional behavioural needs. She seeks specialist advice and guidance to make sure that the school is doing everything it can to meet the needs of these pupils. As a result, serious incidents are rare, but dealt with sensitively and correctly when they occur.
- Attendance has improved considerably and is now above the national average. Almost all pupils are in school, on time, every day. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced to below the national average. The family support

worker reaches out to those families who struggle to get their children to school.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders have taken swift and decisive action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, current pupils, including girls, make stronger progress than previous cohorts. The dip in performance seen in the results of the national tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 in reading, writing and mathematics is being eradicated.
- Recent improvements to the teaching of phonics mean that the large majority of pupils are meeting the threshold in the Year 1 national phonics screening check.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 build on the good start made in early years. Pupils make good progress across key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics because teachers ensure that pupils acquire the essential literacy skills to help them access learning across the curriculum. However, a small number of most-able pupils are not consistently challenged to make greater progress.
- In 2017, national test results at the end of key stage 2 were below average in reading, writing and in particular in mathematics. However, the school's work to improve the quality of teaching and provide additional bespoke support for pupils is helping them to catch up. Inspection evidence, work in pupils' books and the school's latest assessment information show that more pupils are now working at the expected standard in reading, writing and a range of other subjects.
- Work in pupils' books shows the positive impact of recent training on teachers' lesson planning and the activities set for pupils in mathematics. However, while pupils' fluency in mathematics and skills in problem-solving have improved, leaders recognise that pupils need more opportunities to grapple with tricky problems to deepen their understanding.
- Reading is promoted in every corner of the school. A well-stocked library, inviting reading corners and attractive reading displays encourage pupils to pick up a book. Memorable events, such as the bedtime story evening, Harry Potter event and a visit from the Gruffalo, ignite children's and their families' passion for reading.
- By leaders' own admission, the school's focus over the past two years has been on ensuring that more children reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics and are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education. While this goal has been reached, too few of the most able pupils have reached the high standards of which they are capable.
- The large majority of disadvantaged pupils now make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and across the wider curriculum. They receive high-quality support and extra help that matches their individual needs and abilities.
- Most pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because they enjoy their lessons, are taught consistently well and have carefully targeted intervention and catch-up support.
- The large proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are international new arrivals make rapid progress in their language acquisition when they

arrive at the school. Within a short space of time, these pupils acquire the essential language skills needed to take part in lessons. The school's comprehensive support programme helps these pupils to quickly overcome the language barriers to learning so that they achieve at least as well as their classmates.

Early years provision

Good

- Early years is bright, busy and welcoming. Early years staff help parents to settle their children happily into school life. From their earliest days in school, children are able to choose activities, become familiar with well-established routines and develop independence.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement in early years. Leaders recognise that there is more to do to develop the early years environment to provide children with highly stimulating experiences that will improve their learning.
- Teachers clearly prioritise early reading. Daily phonics teaching, class stories and book corners encourage children to read. However, although the early years classrooms are filled with print, such as the alphabet, number lines and reminders for children, the environment is not always used effectively to enhance children's learning.
- Safeguarding in early years is effective. Appropriate levels of supervision, up-to-date staff training and high levels of vigilance ensure that all children are kept safe. Leaders make sure that all statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Children behave well. They listen to their teachers, take care of the resources and are kind to their friends. Staff encourage children to work and play well together.
- Parents are delighted with the quality of provision for their children. They value the excellent communication between home and school. Parents appreciate the frequent workshops offered by school to help them support their child's learning at home.
- Children at the early stages of learning English confidently try out the new words they acquire and happily chat to their friends in their home language. These young children quickly develop a good command of English so that within a short space of time, they are able to access the curriculum.
- Children rush to pull on their wellingtons because they enjoy the forest school and exploring the natural environment. The EAL coordinator makes good use of the outdoor resources to develop children's language skills through well-considered activities.
- Children make a good start to their education in early years from starting points below those typical for their age. By the time they finish their Reception Year, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development is just below that of other children nationally. They are well prepared for learning in key stage 1. However, by the end of Reception, too few of the most able children exceed age-related expectations.

School details

Unique reference number	105471
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10045157

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	384
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Edward Stewart
Headteacher	Mr John Dent
Telephone number	0161 223 3549
Website	www.higher-openshaw.manchester.sch.uk
Email address	admin@higher-openshaw.manchester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 October 2013

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, new school leaders have been appointed, including a new headteacher, chair of governors and two assistant headteachers.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school has a larger than average proportion of pupils with minority ethnic backgrounds. High numbers of pupils join and leave the school other than at the usual times.
- A high proportion of pupils are new to English or in the early stages of learning English. The school supports pupils who speak 33 different first languages.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class and carried out two joint lesson observations with senior leaders.
- A wide range of pupils' workbooks were looked at by inspectors.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, subject leaders, the leader for SEN and/or disabilities, a group of staff, the EAL coordinator and four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally in class and around the school at break- and lunchtimes to seek their views about the school.
- Inspectors met formally with groups of pupils to discuss many aspects of school life and to talk about how they are encouraged to read more frequently.
- Inspectors heard a range of pupils read from across different year groups.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and a range of school documents, including assessment information, attendance and behaviour records, the school's own evaluation of its performance, and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the 15 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including free-text comments. They also spoke to some parents before school.
- Inspectors took account of the 25 questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

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