

The Howard Primary School

The Square, Elford, Tamworth, Staffordshire B79 9DB

Inspection dates

12–13 June 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- All leaders, including directors, ensure that there are high aspirations for every pupil.
- The Small Schools Multi Academy Trust provides highly effective support to the school. The three schools within the multi-academy trust work closely together to share good practice. This benefits all pupils.
- Governance is effective. Directors carefully evaluate the school's development and are well informed about pupils' progress. They hold leaders firmly to account.
- As a result of strong teaching, the majority of pupils in this small school are making good progress in all subjects and developing as successful learners.
- Children make a good start in the early years and settle into school quickly.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers appreciate the friendly and approachable staff. They particularly value the care and attention shown by the headteacher for their children's well-being and learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and attendance are good. They are motivated to learn, take pride in their work and are happy to come to school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils are kind and considerate to each other and show respect for each other's differences.
- Leaders make good use of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities by providing extra well-trained support staff.
- Safeguarding is effective. All staff and governors have received the latest training. Pupils say that they feel safe at the school.
- The work that teachers set in mathematics does not consistently challenge pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- The good teaching promotes reading skills well, inspiring pupils with a love of reading. Leaders recognise that pupils' spelling skills are weaker than their reading skills and other aspects of their writing. Leaders accept that more consistent strategies are needed to improve spelling.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should improve outcomes for pupils by:
 - ensuring that in mathematics lessons teachers plan learning that challenges all pupils at an appropriate level, particularly the most able
 - developing an effective range of strategies to improve pupils' spelling.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The new headteacher has a clear and thorough understanding of the school's strengths. She has quickly identified areas for school improvement and set about addressing these tenaciously. She is determined to make the school the best it can be.
- Together, the executive headteacher and headteacher provide highly effective leadership. They share great passion and ambition for the success of pupils and staff. Following a recent turbulent period for the school, the effective management systems introduced by the executive headteacher now provide stability and support the school's continuing development well. The dedicated daily leadership provided by the executive headteacher and headteacher is highly valued by parents and staff.
- Senior leaders hold teachers firmly to account for pupils' progress. Their rigorous checks provide timely challenge and support where it is needed. As a result, the quality of teaching in the school is continuously improving.
- The executive headteacher ensures that staff benefit from the multi-academy trust's good practice and subject specialists to develop the quality of teaching and enrich pupils' learning. As a result of the appropriate professional development teachers receive, pupils are making good progress.
- The school's curriculum is developing well. Pupils enjoy a suitable balance of academic and creative subjects, helping them learn new skills, and making a significant contribution to their personal and academic achievement. Key stage 2 pupils spoke with enthusiasm about memorable learning experiences, such as visits to the theatre and interesting visitors to the school. For example, during the inspection, Years 5 and 6 took part in a science day with a visitor from a local university. A pupil told the inspector, 'This is fantastic, we have made rockets and are now going to launch them!'
- Leaders ensure that staff are well trained, for example in the delivery of phonics. Leaders carefully track and monitor pupils' progress, making effective use of the reliable assessment procedures that they have introduced. As a result, leaders are well informed about strengths in teaching, pupils' progress and the aspects of provision that need developing.
- Parents and carers are very positive about the school. 'The school is fantastic. We are very pleased with our child's progress and positive mind-set. He adores school,' is just one of many similar comments received during the inspection.
- Leaders make good use of additional funds for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and are diligent in ensuring that these needs are met.
- Additional government funding for sport is used well to improve the quality of physical education, such as the provision for swimming and hockey. Pupils are encouraged to try out new activities, to participate in healthy exercise and to take part in sporting events and competitions.
- Pupils also demonstrate a strong sense of respect and tolerance through their behaviour in class and around the school. These values are taught through well-planned assemblies and connections made with the school's own values of developing

in pupils 'a sense of self-reliance, self-respect and a sensitivity to other people around them and in the wider community'. Pupils have a good understanding about other parts of the world, different religions and a wide range of cultures through music and art.

Governance of the school

- The board of directors is well led and plays a supportive role in the school's strategic development. Directors regularly visit the school to talk to subject leaders about their action plans and the effect that these have on pupils' progress. They visit classrooms, talk to pupils and look at workbooks alongside school leaders.
- Directors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Minutes of meetings show that they ask leaders challenging questions, for example about the progress of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 mathematics and the proportion achieving the higher standards.
- Directors have a good understanding of school finances and question effectively how pupil premium, special educational needs and physical education and sport funding is utilised.
- All directors have received well-planned training in safeguarding and one is trained in safer recruitment. The safeguarding governor regularly visits the school to check safeguarding procedures.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff know the school's policies and procedures well. They receive up-to-date training about safeguarding issues and talk through possible safeguarding scenarios at every staff meeting. Staff conscientiously follow the procedures for making sure that pupils are kept safe.
- The single central record of staff checks is compliant and all records relating to safeguarding are fully up to date.
- The executive headteacher, as designated safeguarding lead, maintains detailed records of reported concerns about pupils, and when necessary swift action is taken to follow up these issues.
- Pupils report that they feel safe. Leaders have put in place appropriate risk assessments to manage parents' and visitors' entry to the school. Pupils are well informed about safety procedures. For example, they regularly undertake fire drills and have a good understanding of the purpose and practice of 'lockdown'.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers demonstrate consistently high expectations for the quality of pupils' work and their progress. Most pupils respond well, through the attention they typically pay to teaching, and the careful presentation of their work.
- Since the appointment of the new headteacher, who has developed further the work begun by the executive headteacher, assessment procedures have been strengthened and clarified. Consequently, school leaders, governors and staff now have an accurate

picture of pupils' progress.

- Teaching assistants are effective and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. They ably support pupils of all abilities, probing understanding by asking pupils to explain their responses to develop their reasoning skills.
- Good teaching in mathematics helps most pupils to make consistent progress. Teachers ensure that pupils grasp new mathematical concepts before they move learning on. However, the work that teachers set in mathematics does not always challenge pupils to make the progress of which many are capable. This is particularly the case for the most able pupils.
- All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and what they can achieve. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. Pupils are encouraged to be positive about their work and to persevere when they find it challenging. As a result, pupils are developing as resilient learners.
- The teaching of the small number of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is focused well on overcoming barriers to learning and supporting pupils who are progressing too slowly. Leaders and staff have accurately identified pupils' learning needs and provide targeted support to enable them to progress more quickly.
- Teachers ensure that pupils develop their writing skills systematically, and provide helpful opportunities for these skills to be practised in other subjects. Leaders acknowledge, however, that there is still more to do in order to improve many pupils' poor spelling, and evidence seen in work scrutiny and classroom observations support this.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils say that they are happy at school and parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey agree. Pupils trust the adults in school and know who they can talk to if they have a concern. Pupils said that if any instances of bullying do occur, staff act swiftly to resolve any issues. One parent commented: 'I feel the school places emphasis on emotional well-being, and ensures children feel safe, secure and happy in the classroom.'
- Pupils enjoy the extra responsibilities given to them. For example, pupils relish the opportunity to be on the sport council in school, and this clearly supports pupils' well-being and care.
- Respectful relationships between staff and pupils mean that pupils work hard and want to do well. Pupils take considerable pride in the presentation of their work.
- Pupils know how to stay safe when using the internet or texting, because adults give them the information they need. For example, they know not to share passwords or personal information when online. Displays in school and information on the website reinforce the teaching given in school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school's atmosphere is calm and orderly. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and respond positively to teachers' high expectations for behaviour. However, a very small number of pupils, mainly boys, can lose focus when work is not well matched to their needs.
- The school's recently revised behaviour policy is used consistently by all staff and this has resulted in pupils having positive learning behaviours in all subjects. All adults manage pupils' behaviour calmly and skilfully, for example through the use of tiered, colour-coded cards to refocus pupils.
- Attendance is in line with national averages. Leaders engage fully with parents to ensure that pupils attend regularly. Clear procedures to follow up any unauthorised absences are applied rigorously.
- The school has a clear system for tracking and reporting bullying, racism and other behaviour incidents. These show that poor behaviour is rare and dealt with effectively.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Leaders monitor the progress of all groups of pupils closely. School assessment information shows that current pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This was also confirmed by the quality of work seen in classroom visits and in pupils' books. Almost all parents responding to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are taught well and make good progress.
- In this primary school, which is of much smaller than average size, outcomes can fluctuate greatly year-on-year. However, leaders were determined that the disappointing performance at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 would not be replicated. In 2017, an extremely small cohort meant that a reliable measure could not be taken. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving much better than the previous cohorts. They have made up for previously lost ground as a result of the good teaching they receive. Consequently, these pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education.
- The work in their books shows that most pupils are working at the standard expected for their age across the curriculum. This is also evident in the school's own assessment information about pupils. However, in mathematics the challenge for pupils, particularly for the most able, is not always sufficient to extend their learning. This means that some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.
- Pupils' spelling is not good enough. They read well and write well but when writing, their spelling lets them down. Leaders accept that more consistent strategies are needed to improve spelling.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress. This is because staff have a clear view of the gaps in the skills and knowledge of these pupils, and sharply identify where pupils need to make more rapid progress.
- Pupils achieve well in phonics. In 2017, by the end of Year 2, the proportion of pupils

achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check was above that seen nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make a good start in the early years. Adults have high expectations for children's behaviour and give close attention to their well-being. As a result, routines are quickly established and children understand the school's rules and know how to keep themselves safe.
- The recently appointed leader of early years has an accurate understanding of the provision's strengths and areas for further development, and has ambitious plans to further develop the learning environment. Expertise within the trust is helping to build a cohesive team that plans and shares creative ideas effectively to support children's good progress from their different starting points.
- The school engages well with parents about their children's learning and development. They are kept informed regularly, for example through the school's online communication tool, about how well their children are achieving. Parents say that they welcome the chance to have 'face-to-face' contact with staff every day.
- Because of small numbers at the end of the Reception year it is not possible to make comparisons with national figures in respect of those children achieving a good level of development.
- Phonics is taught successfully throughout early years. Children use the sounds they learn to build words and write simple sentences, linking their early reading and writing skills effectively. As a result, children's writing develops securely.
- Staff provide a suitably wide range of creative learning opportunities, both indoors and outdoors. These are based on children's interests and the topics being studied. For example, the inspector observed children running a 'mud kitchen', creating menus and 'mud cakes' that they had made. Other children were using different-sized jugs to measure the volume of water. As a result of teachers' careful planning and the interesting resources available, children were deeply engrossed in their learning and discovery.
- The very small number of disadvantaged children and those who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because of highly effective support from a range of staff that meets their specific needs well.
- Children are well behaved, have good attitudes to their learning, and are tolerant of one another. They play together nicely and do so with increasing levels of concentration and enjoyment.
- Children are safe at all times. Clear procedures are in place to keep children safe and all welfare requirements are met. Staff are well trained in first-aid and are suitably qualified.

School details

Unique reference number	142095
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10047256

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	64
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Heather Bowman
Headteacher	Rachel Mills
Telephone number	01827 383 292
Website	www.howard.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@howard.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The Howard Primary School converted to become an academy on 1 August 2015. When its predecessor school, Howard Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good.
- The Howard Primary School is much smaller than the average primary school.
- The school joined the Small Schools Multi Academy Trust in August 2015. An executive headteacher works across the three schools within the trust. These schools are in close proximity to each other and work closely together.
- The headteacher has been in post since February 2018.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is lower than average.
- The vast majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is a little above average.

- The school runs a breakfast club and after-school care provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited lessons in all year groups, accompanied by senior leaders, to observe pupils learning.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, members of staff, pupils and a group of parents at the start of the day.
- The inspector examined a wide range of documentation, including that relating to attendance and behaviour, school improvement planning, assessment information, monitoring of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings and school policies relating to safeguarding.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1 and 2, and met formally with a group of pupils to discuss their learning, behaviour and safety. The inspector also evaluated pupils' books, displays of pupils' work and the school's assessments of the progress made by pupils.
- The inspector took account of 22 responses to the pupil questionnaire, 13 responses from the staff questionnaire, 35 responses from Parent View and 15 parent comments made by text.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

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.

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018